

HOW TO paint figures for your layout



Model Railroader®

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Tips to make a layout look picture-perfect

Expert advice on realistic scenery details and taking awesome photos like this one

WIN
our photo
contest!
Page 93

How to kitbash a junction depot

HOW TO

- Model roads to look like they go on forever
- Build a flatcar and shed from one boxcar

PLUS

- Track-wiring basics for a DCC layout
- Step by step: Build a cast-metal vehicle kit

Scenic details and low photography angles make Pelle Søbørg's layout look super-realistic. See page 36

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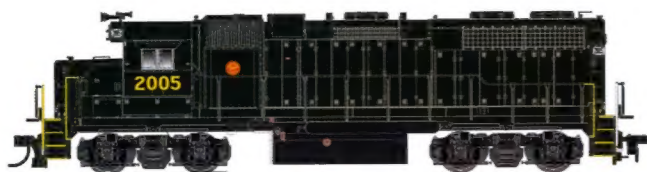


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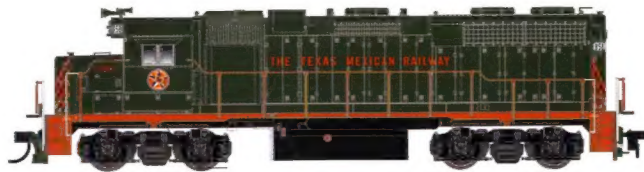
Vol. 76 • Issue 9

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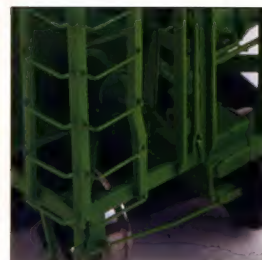
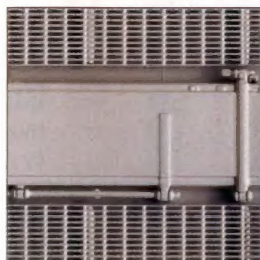


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Coming next issue: Learn how to model passenger station platforms realistically. V.S. Roseman photo

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RAPIDO

Pre-production models shown. Some details not yet added. More paint schemes to follow next year.

From the Editor

The joys of wiring?

Neil Besougloff, Editor



"The . . . wiring must have been installed before the fascia was put up!"

Model Railroader's managing editor David Popp was frustrated. He was sitting on a tile floor holding a screwdriver above his head trying to loosen a terminal strip beneath MR's club layout. The inner surface of the fascia was smack-dab in the way.

David and I have been crawling beneath the 28 x 59-foot Milwaukee, Racine & Troy layout updating its wiring. The layout is 20 years old, and its needs have outgrown its original wiring design. We've been breaking the layout into 11 power districts and updating DCC power supplies and circuit protection. Most of the work is going smoothly – except for little things like that terminal strip.

Some model railroaders enjoy wiring, but many more don't. Their animosity isn't directed at the wiring itself, but at the bending, crawling, and stooping necessary to install wiring.

Here are a few suggestions, reinforced by our recent adventures beneath the MR&T, to make wiring or re-wiring easier:

- Put all tools and supplies in a plastic tool tray (the type with a handle works well) and scoot it around on the floor as you move from place to place. That way, a tool you need will either be in the tray or in your hand – and not across the room.

- Use as much lighting as you can. Try a clip-on shop light. Another useful tool is a no-hands flashlight, the type that can wrap around your neck.

- For big jobs, buy cable-tacker staple gun at a home center. It uses U-shaped staples that don't pinch wires.

- Color code everything and buy enough wire before you get started. Also wrap labels around your wiring at strategic points. You'll thank yourself a few years from now.

- Write wiring notes to yourself on the underside of your layout. I've done this on two previous layouts and years later the notes helped me figure out my original wiring. Tape photocopies of wiring diagrams to the underside of your layout, too.

- Buy knee pads, use a mechanics crawler, or sit on a carpet scrap. Take breaks. Do whatever it takes to make your body comfortable.

- Which brings me to the last point. Be smart. Make everything as accessible as possible. On my home layout, I've created a nook where all of the electronics are topside so I don't have to stoop to make a change. Run wires close to an aisle where they will be within reach. Plan ahead. You'll only be older the next time you crawl under your layout.

NEIL BESOUGLOFF

Contributing to *Model Railroader*

We welcome contributions from our readers, including articles, photographs, and prototype drawings. For detailed information on submitting material to MR, contact our editorial associate Eric Stelpflug at 262-796-8776, ext. 583, or mrmag@mrmag.com. *Model Railroader* assumes no responsibility for the safe return of unsolicited material. We assume unsolicited material is intended for publication by Kalmbach Publishing Co. unless otherwise noted. We assume letters, questions, news releases, and club news items are contributed gratis.

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For more information about these models, visit www.Athearn.com. Be sure to subscribe to Athearn News, our email newsletter, to stay up-to-date with the latest Athearn product information, including new releases.



NS/Maersk paint scheme



Wisconsin & Southern paint scheme



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Updated every month, the Product Review Database features complete reviews from the last several years of *Model Railroader* magazine. You can also search by scale or type of product.

Find the Product Review Database on the home page as well as under the Product and Hobby News tab.

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New product video



This month, watch an HO scale passenger train with digitally controlled pantographs, doors, and realistic sounds.

Cody's Office



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From Walthers™

News & Products



N scale lightweight passenger cars. Rapido Trains has released the first of its Panorama Line of N scale passenger cars, the lightweight coach and duplex sleeper. (A third body style, the Dayniter Leg-Rest Coach, is due in late 2009.) In addition to the

Canadian National paint scheme shown above, the cars are available decorated in more than two dozen Canadian and American road names. The ready-to-run cars, priced at \$47.95, come with interior lighting, etched-metal end gates, and detailed interiors.

Hobby news

iHobby is coming: The 25th annual iHobby Expo, a trade show for the hobby industry, is slated for Oct. 22-25 at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, Ill., just outside Chicago. The show features model railroad manufacturers and vendors, as well as those in other hobbies such as radio control, plastic models, rockets, and die-cast metal toys. The expo is often a showplace for

manufacturers to debut new hobby products. *Model Railroader* will have a full iHobby report on our Web site and in January's News & Products. For more information, go to www.ihobbyexpo.com.

Modeler operates on a larger scale: United States Army officer and model railroader Leslie Parks had no idea his experience with small-scale trains would come in handy on the ground in Iraq. But when Parks was transferred to the

Area of Operations that included the headquarters of Iraqi National Railways, his superiors assigned him to get it working.

Parks, a *Model Railroader* reader, shared his experiences in an e-mail he sent to us.

"In any sound prototype-based model railroad, you must have a purpose," Parks wrote. The Iraqi railroad was one of the largest employers in the area, but since its primary customer had been the former government, not much was moving on the rails.

Parks held meetings between shippers, customers, and the rail line to create a supply chain. His experience with model trains let him identify motive power and rolling stock, tell new ballast from old, and discern from photos of yard activity whether cars were actually in use or merely being shuffled about. This helped him guide the Iraqi railroad from government dependency toward self-sufficiency.

"When my brigade deputy commander asked me how I knew so much about railroad operations, I told him, 'I'm a model railroader!'" Parks wrote. "I never even imagined that my love of trains both big and small and my chosen career path would ever converge as it did that year in Iraq."



HO scale SW7 phase 2 diesel locomotive. This Electro-Motive Division switcher from Broadway Limited Imports is in stores now. The ready-to-run model is equipped with a dual-mode Digital Command Control sound decoder, a five-pole skew-wound motor with flywheels, and magnetic knuckle couplers. Part of BLI's Paragon2 series, the locomotive is available in five road names for \$199.99 each.

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Steven Otte



HO scale locomotives

Electro-Motive Division SW1500 diesel locomotive.

Conrail, Indiana Harbor Belt, Reading RR, and St. Louis Southwestern (Cotton Belt). Three road numbers each. Wire and etched-metal details, Digital Command Control Quick-Plug, and McHenry scale magnetic knuckle couplers. \$99.98. November 2009. Ready-to-Roll. Athearn Trains

Electro-Motive Division F3 and F7 diesel locomotives. F3A:

Bangor & Aroostook (two road numbers available). F7A: Western Pacific (one number). Bühler can motor, etched- and cast-brass details, and magnetic knuckle couplers. Direct-current model, \$149.95; with SoundTraxx Tsunami Digital Command Control sound decoder, \$259.95. Ready-to-run. Executive Line. Bowser



New York Central 20th Century Limited Electro-Motive Division E7 diesel locomotive. Detailed cab interior, wire grab irons, and Proto-Max magnetic knuckle couplers. A-B set: Direct-current model, \$349.98; with Digital Command Control and QSI sound, \$479.98. A unit only: DCC and sound, \$249.98; DC model, \$169.98. Ready-to-run. Wm. K. Walther's Inc.

Electro-Motive Division FP9 and F9B diesel locomotives.

Algoma Central (two road numbers for FP9, one number for F9B), Canadian National, Canadian Pacific, and Chicago & North Western (FP9 only). Four numbers per unit unless noted. Etched-metal grills, cab interior, and Kadee magnetic knuckle couplers. Direct-current model with eight-pin Digital Command Control socket: FP9, \$129.95; F9B, \$94.95. With DCC and QSI sound: FP9, \$199.95; F9B, \$164.95. Ready-to-run. InterMountain Railway Co.

HO scale freight cars

100-ton triple hopper. Chicago & North Western (with yellow end), Norfolk Southern, Pennsylvania Power & Light Co. (with yellow end, five car numbers available), and Reading & Northern (with orange end). Three numbers unless noted. Metal wheelsets and magnetic knuckle couplers. \$23.95. Ready-to-run. Bowser



Denver & Rio Grande Western 6000-series HO3 flatcar. Six car numbers available. Factory-applied weathering, wire truss rods and grab irons, and Kadee no. 714 magnetic knuckle couplers. \$44.95. Ready-to-run. Blackstone Models
19,600-gallon-capacity tank car. Archer Daniels Midland (with new logo) and General American

► In Memoriam

Harold H. Carstens 1925-2009

The president of Carstens Publications, Inc., Harold H. Carstens, died unexpectedly at home on Tuesday, June 23, 2009, at age 84. Affectionately known as "Hal," Carstens joined the staff of *Railroad Model Craftsman* in 1952. He became the company's president in 1962 and went on to found several other magazines, including *Creative Crafts*, *The Miniature Magazine*, and *Railfan*.

He served as president of the former Hobby Industry Association (1970-71) and was awarded the HIA's Meritorious Award of Honor. He also received the National Model Railroad Association's Distinguished Service Award and was named a Pioneer of Model Railroading. Retired Kalmbach vice president Russ Larson remembers Carstens as "having a good sense of humor, but also being a good competitor and conducting his publishing house with integrity."

Carstens is survived by wife Phyllis, daughters Heidi and Rebecca, and sons Harold G. and Henry. All of us at *Model Railroader* offer our condolences to the Carstens family. — Tony Koester, contributing editor



Photo courtesy of Carstens Publications

► Calendar

Sept. 16-19, 2009: 29th National Narrow Gauge Convention.

Doubletree Hotel, Colorado Springs, Colo. 29nng.com

Nov. 13-15, 2009: 37th annual Trainfest. Wisconsin State Fair Park Exposition Center, West Allis (Milwaukee), Wis. trainfest.org

Club offerings



Pittsburgh & Ohio RR United States Railroad Administration 55-ton hopper kit. Custom-decorated Accurail two-bay hopper kit offered by the Pittsburgh & Ohio RR. Magnetic knuckle couplers. \$14 each plus \$7 shipping. To order: Scott Eric Catalano, P.O. Box 308, Koppel, PA 16136. For more information, go to www.pnorrr.com.



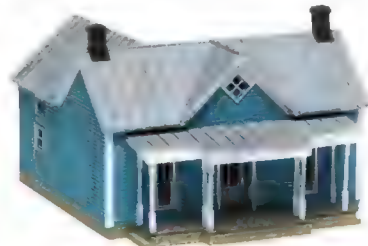
American Car & Foundry three-bay Center Flow covered hopper. Wilkem Scientific. Custom-decorated Accurail car offered by the Providence North-

ern Model Railroad Club. Multiple car numbers available. Accumate magnetic knuckle couplers. \$20 per car, plus \$5.60 shipping for one or two cars. Rhode Island residents add 7 percent sales tax. Send check made payable to PNMRR Club to: Mailcar Hobbies, 655 Jefferson Blvd., Warwick, RI 02886. For more information or to order directly, go to providence-northern.com.



HO scale Chessie System locomotive and caboose. Offered by the Chessie System Historical Society. Atlas Electro-Motive Division GP40-2 diesel locomotive (with oversized Baltimore & Ohio reporting marks or with no numbers/reporting marks), \$109. WrightTrak Railroad Models Baltimore & Ohio Class C-26 bay-window caboose, \$60 (\$55 for members). Microscale decals for caboose, \$3. To order: Chessie

System Historical Society, 100 Dennison Lane, Hockessin, DE 19707; CSHSystemstore@aol.com; or www.chessiesystem.org.



Little Blue House. Laser-cut wood Mountaineer Precision Products kit offered by Ohio Valley RR Historical Foundation. Based on historic structure in LaGrange, Ky. Laser-etched clapboard siding, standing-seam roofing, and plastic porch columns and chimneys. N scale, \$22; HO scale, \$27; O scale, \$37. Shipping is \$5.95 for HO or N scale, \$7.95 for O. To order: Ohio Valley RR Historical Foundation, c/o Bill Schook, 7907 Waterfern Way, Louisville, KY 40291. For information, call Bill Schook at 502-239-1755.

Marks Co. (with Minnesota Corn Processors herald). Six car numbers each. Etched-metal details, metal wheelsets, and Kadec magnetic knuckle couplers. \$32.95. November/December 2009. Ready-to-run. InterMountain Railway Co.

40-foot milk car. Alderney Dairy, Borden's, Bowman's Dairy, Hood's Milk, Pfaudler, and Reid Ice Cream. Two car numbers each; also available undecorated. Factory-installed grab irons, separate door rods, and McHenry scale magnetic knuckle couplers. \$23.98. Ready-to-run. Roundhouse



Pennsylvania RR class Xg and Xh truss-rod boxcars kits. Available in Pennsylvania RR (Lines East or post-1905 lettering),

Pennsylvania Co. (Lines West), and with post-1910s safety appliances versions. Era-appropriate decals and one-piece urethane bodies (trucks and couplers not included). \$33 per kit, plus \$7 shipping for total order. Westerfield

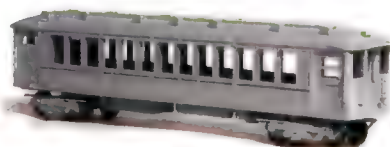
Michigan-style taconite ore car 12-packs. Chicago & North Western (in black or oxide red), Lake Superior & Ishpeming, and Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Co. Also available in data only (painted mineral red). Metal wheelsets and Proto-Max die-cast metal magnetic knuckle couplers on end cars (intermediate cars have dummy couplers). \$169.98. October 2009. Ready-to-run. Gold Line. Wm. K. Walther Inc.



Southern Ry. rebuilt pulpwood car. Represents prototype made

from obsolete boxcar. Available as-built with Roman lettering or with later block lettering. Unpainted kit features one-piece resin body with Tichy Train Group brake details, trucks, and plastic wheelsets. Magnetic knuckle couplers not included. \$39.95. WrightTrak Railroad Models

HO scale passenger cars



Subway/elevated car kits. Undecorated resin kits. Chicago series 4000 (pictured, with or without center door), 6000, and 1-50 elevated cars: Series 4000 or 6000, \$110 per pair; series 1-50, \$55 each. New York subway R32, R38, R62, and Boston 0700 series: \$57.49 each. All have one-piece resin shells, chassis with underbody

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Flxible Visicoach buses in HO and N. Athearn's tour buses have hit the road to hobby shops. The models are available decorated for Utah Parks Co. (pictured), Badger Bus Lines, Consolidated Bus Lines, and Fred Harvey, each available with two destination signboards. They feature clear molded windows, interior seats, and rolling vinyl tires. They cost \$22.98 each in HO scale and \$19.98 in N scale.

details cast in place, and cast window inserts; Boston 0700 series also features etched-brass running boards and fan grill. Decals sold separately. Island Modelworks LLC



New York Central 1948 20th Century Limited passenger cars.

Creek-series 5 double-bedroom buffet-lounge-observation (pictured) and Railway Post Office-baggage car. Sprung diaphragms, Proto-Max die-cast metal magnetic knuckle couplers, and electrical contacts for interior lighting kit (sold separately). Buffet-lounge-observation, \$69.98; RPO-baggage, \$64.98. Ready-to-run. Wm. K. Walthers Inc.

HO scale structures



Country Store Expansion.

Factory-assembled and decorated. Details include liquid propane gas tank, stairway and landing to

upper floor, signs, ice machine, and front porch merchandise. \$69.99. Built & Ready series. Woodland Scenics



Gugisberg & Sons Machining structure kit. Hydrocal castings, Tichy Train Group doors and windows, laser-cut wood water tower, and cobblestone street castings. 5" x 8" footprint. \$99.95. Add \$10 shipping on direct orders. Downtown Deco

N scale locomotives

Electro-Motive Division FP7 diesel locomotive. Burlington Northern (one road number), National Railways of Mexico (four numbers), Ontario Northland (yellow paint scheme, six numbers), Rock Island (maroon and yellow paint scheme, three



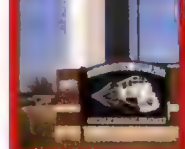
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numbers), and Seaboard Coast Line (three numbers). Wire handrails, etched-metal grills, and Micro-Trains magnetic knuckle couplers. \$119.95. Ready-to-run. InterMountain Railway Co.

N scale freight cars

Pullman-Standard PS-2 2,600-cubic-foot capacity covered hopper. Chesapeake & Ohio, Chicago & North Western, CSX, Missouri-Kansas-Texas, Monon, and Union Pacific (with M-K-T reporting marks). Three car numbers each. Etched-metal and wire details, prototype-specific roof and hatches, and McHenry magnetic knuckle couplers. \$21.98. October 2009. Ready-to-run. Athearn Trains

17,600-gallon-capacity Trinity corn syrup tank car. ADM Transportation Co. (Leaf logo, with or without stripes), Cargill, Corn Products, General American Transportation Corp. (GATX reporting marks), Liquid Sugars, Minnesota Corn Processors, and



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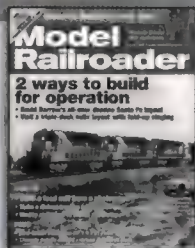


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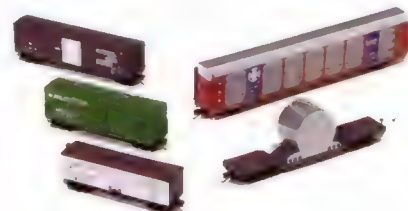
Tru-Sweet/Amaizo. Two car numbers; also available undecorated. Prototype-specific details and Accurate magnetic knuckle couplers. \$21.95; undecorated, \$14.95. Ready-to-run. Atlas Model Railroad Co.

Double-plug-door 85-foot auto parts boxcar. Penn Central (ex-Pennsylvania RR), Pennsylvania, St. Louis-San Francisco (Frisco), and Western Pacific. Etched-metal details, cushion draft-gear enclosures, and magnetic knuckle couplers. Single cars, \$24.95; two-pack, \$49.90. Ready-to-run. Bluford Shops

Canadian National deep-rib wood-chip gondola. 10 car numbers available; \$19.95 per single car, \$39.90 per two-pack, \$59.85 per three-pack, and \$79.80 per four-pack. Ready-to-run. DeLuxe Innovations



Pennsylvania class G26 mill gondolas. Conrail, Penn Central, and Pennsylvania RR (with circle keystone, three car numbers, or shadow keystone). One car number unless noted. Working drop ends, rivet detail on interior, and Micro-Trains magnetic knuckle couplers. \$26.95. Ready-to-run. Eastern Seaboard Models Corp.



Assorted freight cars. Conrail 50-foot standard boxcar with single door and no running board, \$16.85. Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe 89-foot tri-level closed auto rack, \$42.60. Chicago, Burlington & Quincy 40-foot standard boxcar with single door and no running board, \$15.10. Southern Pacific heavyweight depressed-center flatcars with boiler load, two car numbers available, \$23.15. Canadian Northern 36-foot old-time wood refrigerator car, \$25.70. Magnetic knuckle couplers. Ready-to-run. Micro-Trains Line Co.

N scale structures

Speeder shed. Laser-cut wood kit includes basswood, microplywood, and fiberboard construction. Peel-and-stick parts, printed signs, and laser-cut details. \$17.95. Monroe Models

N scale track

Code 65 True-Track. Prototypical United States tie spacing, simulated ballast roadbed, and Code 65 nickel-silver rail. Terminal track includes equipment shed and easy plug-in connection. 10" straight, \$15.95. Six-inch terminal track (two pack), \$16.95. 11" radius half curve, \$9.95. 12 1/2" radius half curve, \$9.95. 14" radius curve, \$14.95. 15 1/2" radius curve, \$14.95. September 2009. Atlas Model Railroad Co.

O scale locomotives

Alco RSD-4 and RSD-5 diesel locomotives. RSD-4: Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe and New Jersey Central. RSD-5: Pennsylvania RR and Southern Pacific. Two road numbers each. Wire grab irons, etched-metal fan grill, fixed pilots, and magnetic knuckle couplers. \$249.95. October 2009. Ready-to-run. Trainman line. Atlas O

O scale freight cars

55-ton coal hopper. New paint schemes: Louisville & Nashville,

Montour (limited edition; available in two-pack only), New Haven, and Peabody Short Line. New road number: Public Service Electric Co. of New Jersey. Four car numbers per road name; also available painted black with data only or undecorated. Wire grab irons, sprung hopper doors, and magnetic knuckle couplers. \$67.95; limited edition Montour two-pack, \$135.90. Ready-to-run. Atlas O

O scale structures



Crazy Horse Brewing Co. kit.

Laser-cut wood walls, foundation, doors, and windows; printed signs; peel-and-stick paper roofing material; and loading dock details. \$168.95. Sidetrack Laser

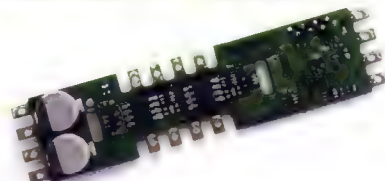
Z scale locomotives

Electro-Motive Division Chicago, Burlington & Quincy GP35 diesel locomotive. Two road numbers. Magnetic knuckle couplers. \$195.95. Micro-Trains Line Co.

Z scale structures

American three-stall wood roundhouse kit. Laser-cut microplywood kit. Clear window glazing, roofing, and cast-metal details. Footprint is 5" x 7". \$79.95. The N Scale Architect

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Safety concern

I just read a letter in the Workshop section of the July 2009 issue of *Model Railroader* about cleaning acrylic paints with windshield washer fluid.

The windshield washer solvent may be a good brush cleaner, but it works because it contains high levels of the solvent methanol (wood alcohol). That's why the fluid doesn't freeze until -20 degrees Fahrenheit and why it takes salt residue off your car windshield.

The problem is that methanol is toxic. It will attack the optic nerve, and can cause blindness with long enough exposure.

If you're using windshield washer solvent to clean brushes, it should be used only in a very well-ventilated area, preferably in a spray hood.

Methanol is also extremely flammable. Since windshield washer fluid is a mixture of methanol and water, I don't know whether the mixture or its fumes would be flammable. To be on the safe side, I would treat the fluid as flammable.

*Phil Keogh
Greenwood Lake, N.Y.*

[Many washer-fluid mixes today are roughly one-third methanol, which is toxic, so always use caution. — Ed.]

Anti-rolling device

I read Olaf Melhouse's article "Keep that car from rolling" in the July 2009 issue of *Model Railroader*. His anti-rolling device looked like a perfect solution to keep cars in place on a grade.

As I was rooting through my parts box to build his device, I came across an item that worked even better for my layout.

While Olaf's car stop is useable anywhere, I have only one spot with a car-rolling problem. From time to time, I'd have to push one or more cars that had moved off spot back into a branchline siding, lifting the lead truck off the track to prevent the car from rolling again. My device has solved that problem.

I had a Caboose Industries ground throw on which the throw bar had broken and was lost. All that was left was the base and the handle. On the siding I cut away one tie and glued the base of the



Work on the South Shasta Lines began in 1950. To learn more about the layout, read the July issue of *Model Railroader*. Godfrey Humann photo

Over 50 years in one place

I found the article "6 decades on the South Shasta Lines" in the July 2009 issue of *Model Railroader* very interesting.

I have a copy of the February 1959 issue of MR, and on page 37 (above left) is a photo taken at the same location as the photo on

page 66 of the July issue (shown on the right).

Of course there are some changes in some of the detail and scenery, but the two women walking up the road haven't budged an inch in over 50 years!

*Howard Jones
Kearny, Ariz.*

ground throw to the subroadbed perpendicular to its normal position. This way the handle can be set across the rail, preventing a car from rolling past it. I painted the handle yellow so operators can see it easily.

When not in use, the yellow handle is positioned away from the track. When I need to "set the brakes," I push the cars past the stop, uncouple and back away the locomotive, and then swing the handle across the rail.

Although it still requires a bit of manual manipulation of the cars to set and remove the device, it's a big step forward from lifting the car off the tracks.

*Herb Kern
Mobile, Ala.*

F40PH background

Being a big diesel fan, I was dismayed at the omission in the "historical background" sidebar of the F40PH article on page 59 of the July 2009 issue of *Model Railroader*.

The F40 wasn't intended to replace the worn-out E units as implied. This fell to Amtrak's new SDP40F fleet, an SD40 clone

designed for passenger service and patterned after Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe's FP45 but with new trucks.

After several much-publicized high-speed derailments, the public and some railroads became frightened of the SDP40F even though extensive testing proved no definite fault. Many were returned to EMD within five years.

This forced the smaller, mid-range F40s into service as the new backbone of the long-distance fleet. Ironically, ATSF purchased and modified some of the orphaned SDPs, which lasted in freight service for another 20 years.

*Ken Bailey
Sheboygan, Wis.*

Comments, suggestions, and additional information on *Model Railroader* articles and departments are welcome in this column. Every comment will be read, but not all can be printed or answered. Make your statement in 300 words or less, and send it to Railway Post Office, *Model Railroader* magazine, P.O. Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187, or e-mail rpo@mrmag.com. Please include your name, city, and state.

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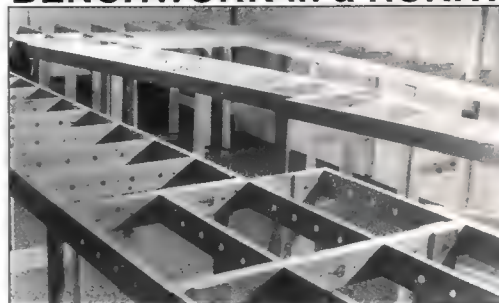
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Louisville & Nashville's wrecker no. 40026 is a 250-ton capacity diesel-electric crane capable of lifting a locomotive. The back of the cab has stenciled instructions for moving the crane. Jim Hediger photo

Taking a wrecker on the road

When sent to a derailment, where is the wrecking crane placed in the work train's consist? Is the entire wreck train taken to the work location? How do they get the crane ahead of the locomotive when the train arrives at the work site?

Thomas Maupin, Moore, Okla.

Railroad wreck crews operate like a volunteer fire department. Most of the men involved work in the car shop or engine terminal. When the emergency whistle blows, everyone drops what they're doing to gather up their travel bag and head for the wreck train.

Up through the steam-to-diesel transition era, most big wrecking cranes were steam powered. The wrecker was normally parked near the engine terminal's boiler plant where a flexible steam connection kept the crane's boiler hot. When an emergency call came in, the steam line was disconnected and a fire was started in the firebox. By the time the crane traveled to the work site, the boiler would be ready to operate the winches.

Some wreckers, like the Louisville & Nashville crane shown above, were converted into diesel-electric units with powerful electric motors that operated the winch machinery. Once the diesel engine is started, it's ready to use within a few minutes.

Most wrecking cranes travel in a special train called the "wreck outfit" that carries every-

thing that may be needed at the worksite. The crane normally travels with the boom trailing (facing toward the rear) so it extends out over an idler flatcar or a special boom car. A kitchen-dining car is included, and in remote areas camp cars are added for the off-duty workmen.

The crane may be coupled to the locomotive, or a few modified cars of tools and equipment may be used to space the heavy crane's weight away from the locomotive. Everything else is hauled behind the crane.

Wrecking cranes are extremely top-heavy, so their maximum speed limit is normally in the 25- to 35-mph range. Because of their concentrated weight, big cranes can't travel over light branch lines or some bridges.

Upon arrival at the last siding before the wreck, the supply and camp cars are usually set out. Then the crew makes a run-around move to get behind the crane and tool cars. Finally, with the crane in the lead, the engine slowly pushes the wreck outfit to the work site. Once it reaches the derailment, the crane operator swings the boom around to begin the cleanup job.

Clearing the track starts with cars that can be set on shop trucks and moved out of the way. Heavily damaged cars are just moved to the side to clear the right-of-way. Later on, the wreck crew returns and works between trains to gather up any remaining debris.

— Jim Hediger, senior editor



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This low switch stand shifts the derail into position on top of the rail to stop any car that might roll out and foul a main track. Jim Hediger photo

How derails work

During a recent Amtrak trip, I noticed numerous spur tracks fitted with some sort of blocking device operated by a low switch stand. Our conductor said they were derails. Why would anyone want to purposely derail a car or engine, especially on a remote siding or branch line?

Norm Stevens, Denver, Colo.

Derails are safety devices used to keep equipment from rolling out of a spur track onto an active running track, or to keep cars and locomotives from moving into a work area. They're normally found in places where the best option to stop a car is to drop it on the ties.

Derails are mandatory in shop areas to protect workmen who may be in between or underneath the standing equipment. Special switch locks are applied on shop derails so they can't be released unless proper precautions are taken to make sure all of the workmen are safely out of the way.

Freight cars spotted on industrial tracks normally have their hand brakes applied to keep them from moving if a forklift working inside the car starts or stops. Though vandals can release a hand brake, a derail is secured with a switch lock that can only be opened with a railroad switch key.

These devices are also installed at the railroad end of industrial tracks where car movers or Trackmobiles are employed. A derail keeps an industry, like a grain elevator, from shoving cars onto a main track. It also stops any car that may inadvertently roll free while being moved. Roller-

bearings make today's freight cars move easily, but momentum makes them hard to stop. That's where the derail has to do its job. —J.D.H.

Ore car variations

Can you explain the differences between the traditional hopper-bottom HO ore cars offered by Walther's and the recent Athearn 26-foot high-sided gondola-style cars? Were they used together?

Peter Smith, London, England

The bottom dump ore cars were used primarily in the Great Lakes region, where their short length matched the ore dock pockets used for loading ore carriers. Their hopper doors are opened and closed by machines that travel alongside the cars on top of the docks. Some similar, but longer, versions of these cars were also used in Southern California.

The flat bottom cars, like the new Athearn (former MDC) cars, represent prototypes built for use in Southern California. A similar flat-bottom Pennsylvania RR ore car made by Bowser (formerly Stewart) was used in the Northeast. The flat-bottom cars transported iron ore directly to inland steel mills, where the cars were unloaded by rotary dumpers.

Though both types of ore cars did similar jobs, the different regional unloading methods made them incompatible. —J.D.H.

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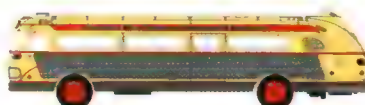
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Build a handy strip storage rack

This storage rack came out of my desire to reduce the frustration factor involved in storing and finding specific sizes of strip materials. In particular, I wanted a way to keep the short lengths organized and handy.

This storage rack is made from $\frac{3}{4}$ " white thin-wall PVC pipe mounted on a wood base. The rack has 12 sections that are each made up of five pieces of pipe ranging in length from 2" to 12" in 2" increments. All of these pipe sections are glued together and to the plywood base so the rack is portable. It takes about 30 feet of the pipe for each rack.

It's easier to clean large pieces of pipe, so I used a rag dipped in lacquer thinner to remove the printed lettering before cutting.

I used a manual tube cutter, but a power miter saw would certainly speed up this step, and a disk sander would help with smoothing the cut edges.

Next, I made an assembly jig with a right-angle corner, as shown in the lower photo. I place the longest pipe in the jig first, flush against the bottom stop. Next, I apply a liberal bead of PVC cement along the side of the next shorter pipe, starting and ending about $\frac{3}{8}$ " from the ends. It isn't necessary to add glue to both pieces. I make sure good contact has been made and the pipes are even at the bottom and flat against the base.

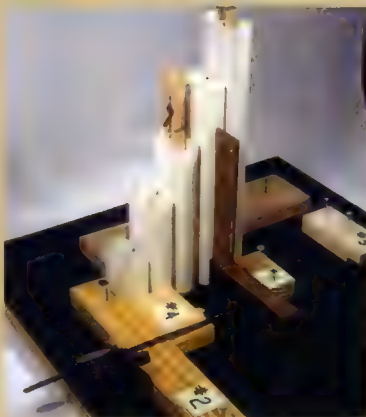
I repeated this step for the remaining shorter pieces of pipe, being careful to keep them aligned across the bottom. I let the joints harden for 15 to 20 minutes before removing the assembly from the jig.

After all 12 sections are assembled, I stand them up individually and make sure they're standing straight and square. Any problems can be resolved by sanding them on 150-grit sandpaper.

I also use the jig to maintain alignment between the sections during final assembly, as shown



Bob Whitten's stepped storage rack keeps short strip materials organized for easy retrieval.



Bob made a simple jig to keep the various pipe sections aligned and square during assembly.

above. I position the first section tight against the left guide with the short pipe to the front. Then I apply a bead of PVC cement to the left side of all five pipes, press them against the first section, and clamp everything together while the cement sets.

Once the joints hardened, I measured the bottom of the rack and cut a $\frac{1}{2}$ " plywood base about $\frac{1}{32}$ " larger. I trimmed its edges with pieces of screen molding.

I attached the pipe assembly to the base by applying generous amounts of PVC adhesive to all of the intersections before I carefully set it onto the base, flush against the front molding. The PVC adhesive bonds to the plywood, but it takes a little while, so I set the rack aside to dry overnight. I finished up with a label board across the front. — Bob Whitten, Dallas, Texas



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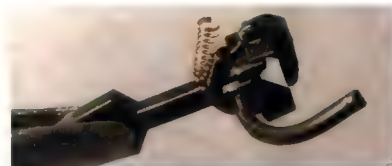
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Eric applies a tiny drop of Walther's Goo to one end of each coupler knuckle spring. Eric Brooman photos



The dab of Goo secures the shank end of the knuckle spring, and the adhesive doesn't affect its motion.

Permanent mounting for coupler knuckle springs

Kadee knuckle springs can be difficult to insert into the coupler castings, and as a result, the rug under my workbench holds a small fortune in lost coupler springs. To reduce the loss, I now secure the springs with Walther's Goo.

The key to my system is a pair of wide-bladed tweezers that I filed into thin flat shapes that will slip easily into the coils on Kadee knuckle springs. Once in place, gentle pressure holds the spring securely in the tweezer's grasp.

I then apply a dab of Walther's Goo adhesive to one end of the spring. (A toothpick dipped in Goo is plenty.) I've found that Goo tends to thicken with age, so I do this step with a fresh tube to apply as thin a coat as possible. Then I slip the adhesive-coated end onto the lug cast into the coupler shank. After a few minutes, I slip the opposite end of the spring onto its knuckle lug, being careful to keep the Goo away from the moveable coupler parts. I have yet to lose a spring that's been "Gooed" on.
Eric Brooman, St. Peters, Mo.

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Step by Step



Ulrich HO scale Kenworth tractor with Fruehauf square-nose trailer

Alloy Forms HO scale
1948 Studebaker



N scale Ford pickup (included with
Micro Engineering's Poor Boy Mine)



Think cast-metal vehicles have gone out of fashion? Guess again. *Model Railroader* associate editor Cody Grivno shows you how to make these vehicle kits look like factory-assembled models. Jim Forbes photos

How to prepare, assemble, and paint cast-metal vehicle kits

In an era of factory-assembled models, it's refreshing to sit down at the workbench and do some good ol' fashioned modeling. In this month's installment of Step by Step, I'll show you how to assemble and paint cast-metal vehicle kits so they look just as good as factory-assembled models.

Cast-metal vehicles aren't new to model railroading. In fact, they've been part of the hobby for decades. Alloy Forms, Custom Finishing, GHQ, Pirate Models Ltd., and The

Wheel Works are just some of the firms that offer these kits today.

The rapid growth of the assembled scale vehicle market has somewhat overshadowed cast-metal cars and trucks. This is unfortunate, as many manufacturers of cast-metal vehicles produce hard-to-find cars not offered in other media, such as Alloy Forms' HO scale 1948 Studebaker Commander Starlight coupe.

If you've never assembled a cast-metal kit, that's okay. Many of the

tools and adhesives used to construct wood and plastic kits can be used on metal models. Sanding sticks, jeweler's files, and cyanoacrylate adhesive (CA) are the basics you'll need to get started.

Whether you're a newcomer to the hobby or a veteran model railroader, consider building a cast-metal vehicle kit. You'll not only enjoy the time at the workbench, but you'll have some fine-looking cars and trucks for your model railroad.

Step 1 Casting preparations



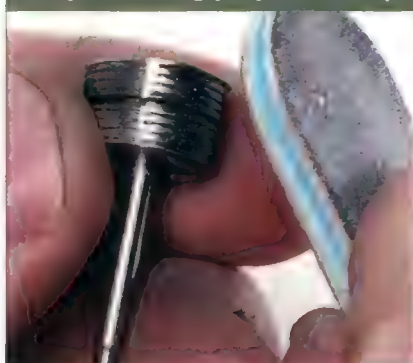
The key to success with cast-metal vehicles is careful preparation of the castings. As you can see in the photo at left, this Ulrich tractor cab (sent to us by reader Eugene Volkoff of Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif., for our HO Beer Line layout) had a lot of flash on the driver's side window. I used a square jeweler's file to remove the excess metal, working carefully along the perimeter of the opening so I wouldn't remove too much material or damage the windshield wiper detail.

Most veteran modelers have two sets of jeweler's files, one for metal

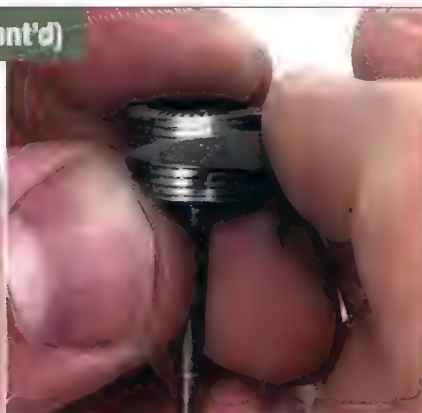
and one for plastic. Small metal filings that get caught in the teeth of the file can damage plastic parts, so it's best to have two sets.

Another preparation technique used by some modelers is to soak the white-metal castings for a couple hours in water with a few drops of vinegar added. Why soak the parts *before* handling them? Well, the water and vinegar solution will slightly etch the surface of the castings and remove any impurities leftover from the casting process. The cleaned castings will take paint and glue better.

Step 1 Casting preparations (cont'd)



Sanding sticks and sandpaper work great for removing seams leftover from the casting process. Here I'm using a medium-grit stick to remove a raised seam on the tractor tires. I sanded the tire castings carefully to preserve the tread detail.



The seam also ran through the tread on the tires. I used a triangle-shaped jeweler's file to remove the seam, making several light passes to keep the treads parallel. Don't rush this step, as it's easy to damage metal castings beyond the point of repair.



The Alloy Forms Studebaker casting had small pockmarks on the trunk, which I filled with Squadron putty. Once the putty had dried, I used 400- and 600-grit sandpaper to smooth the area.

Gap-filling CA can be used as an alternative to putty here.

Step 2 Cementing metal parts

Epoxy and cyanoacrylate adhesive (CA) both work well for metal-to-metal joints. Two-part epoxy provides the strongest bond between parts. Epoxy dries slowly (5 to 15 minutes), giving you time to adjust the parts before it cures.

Gap-filling CA also provides a strong bond, but has a quicker dry time. I used medium-viscosity CA to assemble the Studebaker shown at the far right. Once I had the parts in position, I applied accelerator to the CA so it would dry instantly.



Step 3 Priming and painting



Before painting the castings, I masked the gluing faces with painter's tape. To keep the paint from bleeding under the tape, I burnished the tape with a toothpick.



To ensure the final colors would be even, I sprayed the castings with Rust-Oleum Gray Automobile primer.

The next day, I airbrushed the Studebaker with Polly Scale

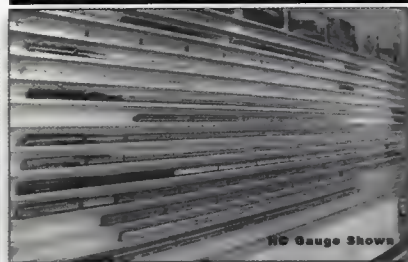


Caboose Red. After the paint dried, I applied Microscale Clear Gloss to the exterior with an airbrush. I painted the interior Polly Scale Sand using a brush.

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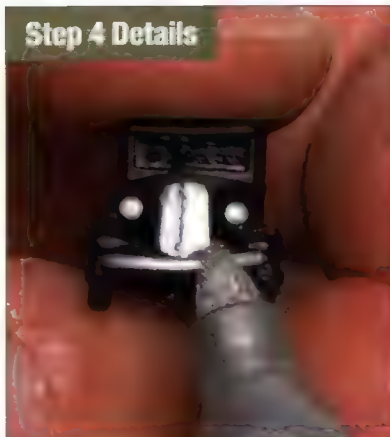
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Step by Step

Step 4 Details



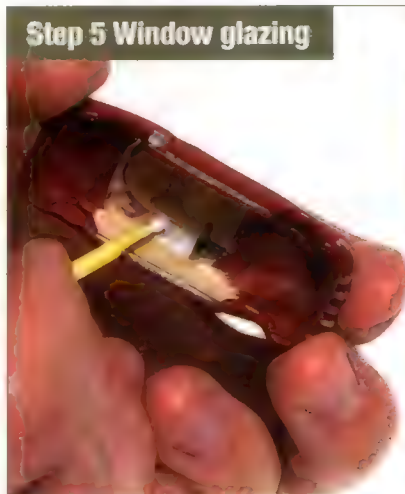
The trick to making cast-metal vehicles pop is painting the details, such as grills, door handles, and hood ornaments. Though I painted some of these items with a brush, I highlighted the majority of these details with a metallic silver Sharpie that I purchased at a local hobby shop. In most instances, the color covered in one pass. When it didn't, I let the first application dry completely before making a second pass.



When painting details, don't forget the brake and taillight lenses. On the Ulrich trailer shown above, I painted the taillights with a silver metallic base coat. Once the paint was dry, I applied Tamiya Clear Red over it. The paint, available in orange, blue, yellow, and other colors, dries clear, suggesting translucent taillight lenses.

You can also tint Microscale Kristal Kleer with red food coloring to get the same effect.

Step 5 Window glazing



There are two options for window glazing on cast-metal vehicles. On the Alloy Forms Studebaker, which has small, curved windows, I used Kristal Kleer. This product comes out of the bottle white but dries clear. It works best for window openings about 1/4" or smaller. In the photo above, I'm applying the Kristal Kleer with a medium Microbrush. A round-head toothpick is a handy applicator, too.



Option two is to use clear styrene, such as .010" sheet from Evergreen shown above. I cut the styrene slightly larger than the window opening and attached it to the inside of the cab with Woodland Scenics' Scenic Accent glue. This product also comes out of the bottle white and dries clear and tacky. It's this tacky property that makes Scenic Accent glue ideal for bonding clear styrene to plastic and metal. **MR**

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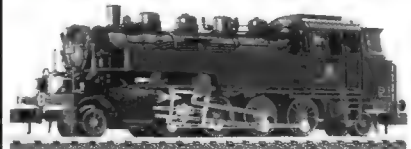
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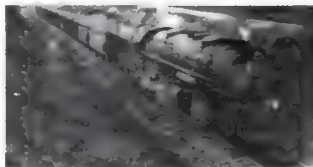


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Make your layout look picture-perfect



Expert advice on photographing realistic scenes and improving your modeling

By Pelle K. Søbørg

Photos by the author

Observing a layout from a typical overhead perspective is fine for casual viewing. However, I've found that this vantage point is too distant to see, much less appreciate, the authentic scenery and details added to many layouts.

Though it would be great to become a scale-sized figure on my HO scale layout, I discovered a more practical solution to achieving my desired low-angle perspective. By simply bending at the knees, I was rewarded with stunningly realistic ground level views of my layout. Inspired by this new perspective, I decided to capture what I saw.

That's when I placed my digital camera at the lowest possible trackside position to photograph the view. In many cases, I placed the camera directly on the layout surface, roadway, or tracks. Even though these locations aren't always low enough to make a photo seem exactly as if it was shot by an HO scale (1:87.1) photographer, they still capture the essence of that perspective.

Because I'm using a digital camera equipped with a display screen, I can immediately check the resulting images, adjust the camera settings, and re-shoot if necessary. However, this approach also reveals some shortcomings in my modeling efforts. Consequently, I've learned to use my camera both to shoot realistic layout photos and to help improve my modeling.

I'll share some of the helpful techniques – for layout modeling and photography – that I've developed. Let's begin by looking at a few basics of digital photography.

In addition to enhancing scenery on his HO scale layout, Pelle Søbørg also enjoys adding realistic details and effects to rolling stock and locomotives.

Many of his techniques appear in his new book, Done in a Day, now available at KalmbachBooks.com.

Author Pelle Søbørg captured this low-angle photo using a Canon 350D camera set to 1 sec. at F29, ISO 200, 28mm.

Working with a digital camera

With the advent, evolution, and affordability of digital cameras, it's now easier than ever to take high-quality layout photos. Though you don't need expensive equipment to take good photos, you'll want a camera that includes features for manually adjusting focus, aperture (f-stop), and white balance.

These features are included on most of the newest digital single-lens reflex cameras (DSLR), including the Canon EOS 350D model I use. My camera is equipped with an 18-55mm zoom lens, which is perfect for taking model railroad photographs.

By using a DSLR, you can view your subject through the camera lens, rather than through a separate viewfinder lens. When shooting with a DSLR you'll see exactly how the image will appear, which makes it easier to focus and accurately crop the subject before you take the photo. You can further crop an image using computer software, but I prefer to get as close to the desired crop while I'm photographing the actual subject.

When shooting, there are a few general practices that have improved the quality of my shots, including:

- **Take photos using the highest resolution available.** The best choice is to photograph using the RAW format. This is essentially a digital negative that

contains all the data used to create an image. With the aid of photo-editing software, such as Adobe Photoshop, you can easily adjust and resize these files without sacrificing image quality.

- **Use the smallest possible aperture.** Setting your camera to the highest f-stop number results in a long exposure time, so you'll need to keep the camera completely still when taking pictures. It's impossible not to shake the camera when you push the exposure button no matter how careful you are, so you have to use either a remote device or the camera's timer.

- **Invest in proper lighting.** Fortunately, the lights that illuminate my model railroad are also bright enough to serve as a light source for my photography. But if your layout isn't well-illuminated, you could invest in a few photo lamps, stands, and additional lighting essentials. However, you should also consider the benefits of spending the money to improve your room and layout lighting instead.



Shooting low



To create the illusion of depth, Pelle adjusted his Canon 350D digital camera to 0.6 sec. at F22, ISO 200, 24mm.

In this shot of my HO scale Daneville & Donner River layout, the scene is less than 24" wide. In fact, the scene would appear to stretch even deeper if I had set an object in the foreground, closer to the lens of my camera.

To accomplish this effect, I simply placed my camera directly on the highway. In the second photo, you'll see the exact position of my camera on the layout, including the small wedge of extruded foam insulation board I often use to steady and level the camera body. A mini tripod or small bean bag is also handy, but the scrap of foam board is the least expensive option.

I specifically constructed this scene so that the highway follows the rolling contours of the terrain. To capture the changes in elevation, I positioned the camera far enough back on the first hill to see the initial crest of the highway in the foreground. It's this section of highway at the bottom of the image that helps build the illusion that the next hill is several yards and one dramatic dip in the road away.

To further enhance the illusion of distance, I adjusted the lens to capture the scene in an optimal, 24mm wide-



For the ideal low-angle view, Pelle often sets his camera directly on the layout, elevated with foam wedges.

angle setting. I also composed the image such that the edge of the layout didn't show. Consequently, you'll look at this image and imagine that the desert scenery continues on forever in all directions.

Coming in close

In this example the two subjects, the Daneville depot and a Union Pacific manifest train, are very close to the lens. The second photo reveals how I placed my camera as low as possible on the layout to achieve the perspective of an HO scale figure standing on the station platform.

As demonstrated in the third image, focus is the key to capturing close-up images from this low perspective. If you focus on the nose of the lead locomotive, the nose and area in front of it will be sharp. However, the second locomotive will now appear out of focus.

To compensate, I captured this image by setting my camera at the highest f-stop, which provided the greatest depth of field. I focused on the center of the lead locomotive. This way the image would be in focus from the nose of the lead unit to cab of the second unit. Using the depth of field preview, I checked the focus through the viewfinder.



Pelle kept the key subjects in focus by adjusted his Canon 350D digital camera to 0.8 sec. at F29, ISO 200, 28mm.

Photoshop fixes



Distorted perspective

Shooting with a wide-angle lens can produce the distortion evident along the edges of this photo.

After I've shot a close-up image on my layout, I typically use Adobe Photoshop (adobe.com) or a similar photo-editing software to make a few adjustments.

As the first photo shows, shooting with a wide-angle lens can produce some distortion in the image. Using one of the many helpful tools found within Photoshop software, I modified the perspective of the image to correct the vertical alignment of the depot walls and the building on the far side of the railroad tracks.

The next photo shows where I lightened the areas around the trucks, plow, and under the roof overhang of the depot. To lighten specific areas on an image I typically use the dodge tool in Photoshop.

In the final photo, you'll see how I cropped the image to minimize the room ceiling that's visible at the top of the photo frame. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to crop out the entire ceiling. I removed the last visible portion of the ceiling from the frame required using Photoshop's clone stamp to copy and add sky to the background.

In addition to editing images using Photoshop, I've also used the software to manually combine several photos to produce an image with greater depth of field. Merging



Use dodge tool to lighten specific areas

Adobe Photoshop image-editing software includes numerous tools for improving digital photos.



Pelle used the crop tool and clone stamp to edit out the room ceiling and fill in missing sky background.

images in this manner can be a tedious task, so it's not something I do often. In most cases, using alternative photo-editing software or techniques yields photos that are suitable for my use and enjoyment.



Here's how Pelle positioned the camera lens just a few inches away from the depot and locomotive.

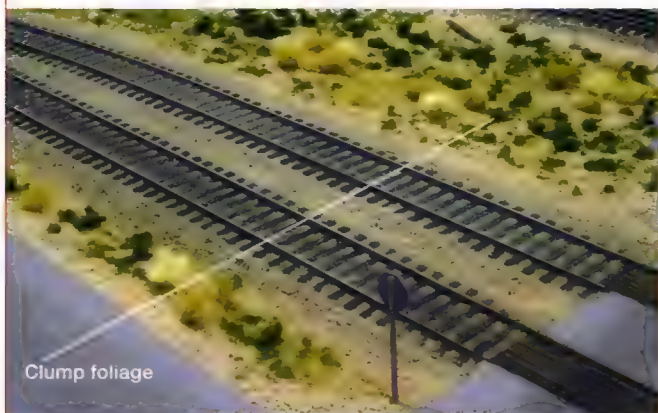


This image shows how Pelle focused on the center of the lead locomotive, rather than on the nose.

Photo-finished scenery



Close-up photos revealed minor scenery imperfections, so Pelle replaced coarse clump foliage with refined prairie tufts.



The Daneville desert scenery as it looked before (left) removing the Woodland Scenics clump foliage, and then after (right) adding the Silflor prairie tufts along the right-of-way.

After photographing desert scenes on the Danville portion of my layout, I studied the images and discovered a few things I wanted to refine. One revision was to the clump foliage bushes included in my arid desert scenery.

My original desert scenery featured basic ground cover consisting of clump foliage, coarse turf, and field grass from Woodland Scenics in olive green and burnt grass color shades. While these materials are suitable for many scenery applications, the low perspective of my photos highlighted the rough appearance of the stark desert terrain found throughout my layout.

To refine the scenery in this area, I replaced those materials with prairie tufts made by Silflor (available from sceneryexpress.com). This fiber grass scenery is produced

in small tufts attached to backing paper. It's available in colors appropriate for all four seasons.

First, I removed all of the clump foliage bushes. I decided the autumn and winter colors looked best for my desert, so I peeled several tufts from the sheet, dabbed white glue on the bottom of each, and randomly applied them to the layout surface.

The before and after photos show the improvement this one change made to the overall appearance of the Daneville desert. I was so pleased with the results that I'm considering a complete desert makeover using the prairie tufts. While it would be a time-consuming process to install so many individual tufts, the results would certainly give my desert terrain an ideal appearance in photos.

Camera-ready construction



Minor flaws are often found in structure kits. It doesn't take much effort to correct these and improve your photos.

Even without looking through the lens of a camera, I can easily see oversized railings and trim pieces on a commercial plastic structure kit.

The photo above shows the completed Walthers no. 933-3081 plastic pellet transfer kit I added to my layout. Prior to installation, I replaced the original kit railings with some I built from .010" x .020" Evergreen styrene strip.

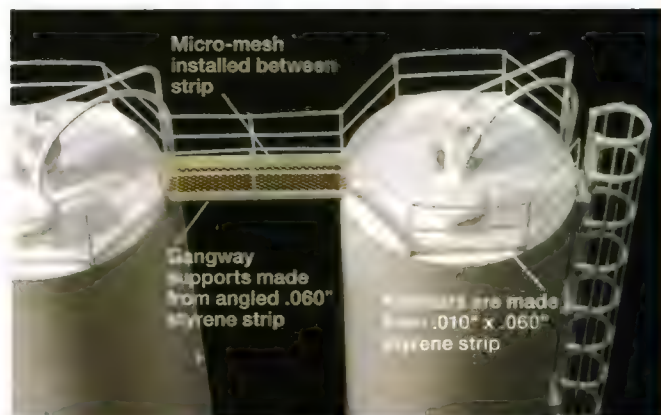
With the objective of making my structures appear as authentic as possible, I also made a few additional modifications to the model. Though all of the silos have grooves for ladder brackets, only one requires a ladder and ladder cage. I filled the grooves in the other silos with putty and sanded them smooth.

Next, I used styrene rods to fill the original railing mounting holes on the silo tops, traced the contour of replacement railings, assembled the silos, and then glued them to the base. After attaching the silos to the base, I made new gangways from .060" Evergreen styrene angle and brass micro-mesh. I installed pieces of angle between the silos and glued the micro-mesh into the resulting channel.

From .010" x .060" Evergreen styrene strip, I made kickbars to support the railing and attached them to each of the silo tops. Using a hobby knife, I cut all the vertical stanchions from .010" x .020" styrene and glued them to the outside of the kickbars and gangways.

More on our Web site

To view video footage of Pelle K. Søbørg's amazing HO scale Daneville & Donner River layout in action, you'll want to visit www.ModelRailroader.com.



Fine details such as walkways, railings, and ladders replace oversized components from the original kit.

Next, I cut pieces of railing from .010" x .020" styrene in lengths for each silo and gangways, and then glued the pieces to the stanchions. For easy assembly, I attached the railings ends to the first stanchion and allowed them to dry before working on the next stanchion.

The ladder cage needed some modifications as well, so I replaced the vertical bars on the cage with .010" x .020" strip. First, I removed all of the vertical bars from the original assembly. I glued the resulting half-circle pieces to the ladder before attaching five .010" x .020" vertical bars.

Finally, I painted the entire structure with Testor's Model Master no. 2104 Panzer Interior Buff. After allowing the paint to dry, I applied weathering colors to the silos before installing the entire picture-perfect assembly. **MR**

Finishing unpainted figures yourself is a fun way to populate your layout. Shown below are plastic 1:87 and 1:23.5 people from Preiser, and metal 1:76 figures from Dart Castings.



Adding scale people to your layout can be as simple as opening the box and gluing them in place. Manufacturers such as Preiser, Merten, Woodland Scenics, and others offer a selection of realistic, factory-painted plastic figures for model railroads.

However, if you have a railroad that requires a large population, it can be more economical (and more fun) to paint your own figures. For the examples I've shown here, I'm using Dart Castings (www.dartcastings.uk) 1:76 proportion metal figures, as well as plastic models from Preiser (www.preiser.com). In addition, there's a wealth of unpainted plastic and metal castings from other manufacturers in various scales.

You don't need a lot of tools and materials to get started painting your own figures. As for painting supplies, good quality red sable brushes in no. 3 and no. 3/0 sizes are all that's initially required. Chances are you already have an assortment of acrylic model paints on hand, but if you don't, about a dozen basic colors, including white, black, and skin tones, are what you need to begin. As you hone your figure-painting skills, you can add other paint colors and brushes. You'll also need a hobby knife and small jeweler's file or two.

Figure painting can be an enjoyable hobby all its own. I find the work quite relaxing, and the best part is that my figures don't look like everyone else's.

Figure painting 101

How to prepare and paint plastic and metal figure castings for model railroads

By David Popp • Photos by Jim Forbes

Figure preparation

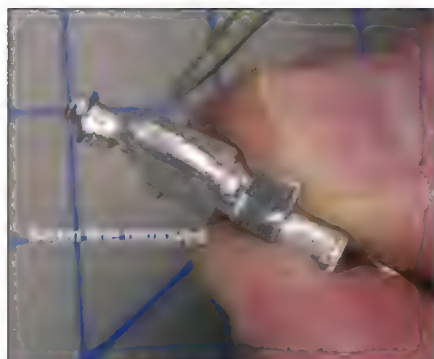
Though you may want to start painting figures as soon as you take them out of the package, you need to do some cleanup work on the castings first. Almost all castings will have seam lines where the parts of the mold fit together. If you think paint will hide a seam line, guess again. Seam lines and flash (leftover molding bits) need to be carefully removed. I use several tools for this project, including a sharp hobby knife, rounded needle files, and a sanding stick.

This is also the time to level a figure's feet so it will stand up properly. If it's a plastic figure, I use a fine-grit sanding

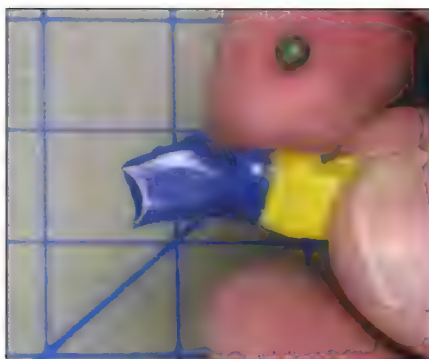
stick for this step. To level the feet of metal figures, I use a flat file. When filing feet, metal or plastic, be very gentle to avoid bending the figure's legs or snapping off its feet.

I use a two-part epoxy putty from Polymeric Systems called Kneadatite (shown below) to fill any gaps in the figure or add missing details. I apply the putty to the figure (plastic or metal) with a sharp hobby knife, and then I let the putty dry overnight before I file, carve, or sand it.

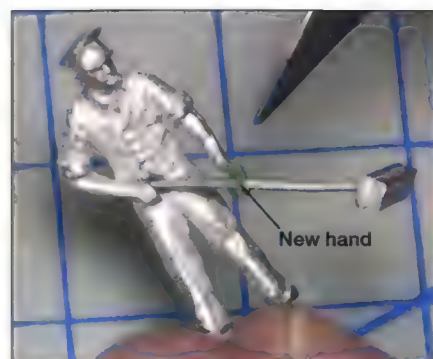
Next, I wash the castings in warm water with a little dish soap to remove any oils, and let the figures dry.



Use a needle file to remove any visible molding seams. Otherwise they'll show through the paint.



To use the Kneadatite epoxy putty, mix equal parts of the two colors. When it turns green, it's ready to use.

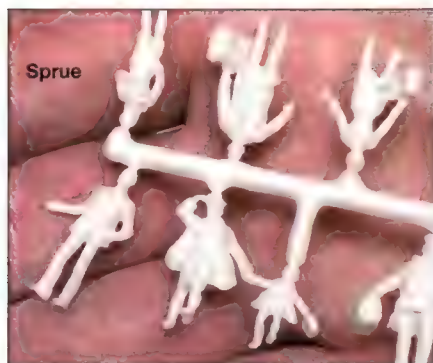


You can use the epoxy putty to replace missing details, such as this man's left hand on the broomstick.

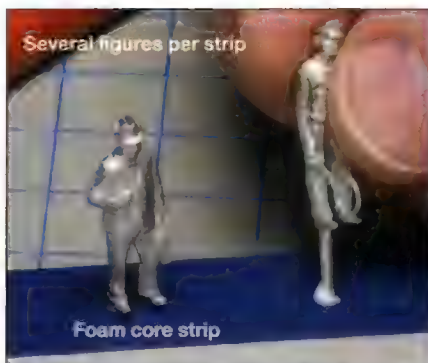
Mounting and priming

Once the castings have been washed, they need to be mounted to a handle of some sort so you can easily hold them while painting. Some figures, such as the plastic HO scale Preiser figures shown at left, come attached to a sprue, which you can use for a handle. When you finish a figure, simply clip it off the sprue – just don't forget to touch up the top of its head with paint.

I typically work on about a dozen figures or so at the same time, so I've taken to mounting individual figures on strips of foam core board. I cut the strips $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide and 4" to 6" long. This allows me to mount four to six figures per strip. I cement the figures to the foam core with white glue.



Some figures come on sprues, such as these Preiser HO scale figures, making them easy to hold and paint.



If figures are individual castings, mount them to a stick or strip of foam core, making them easier to hold.



Applying a primer to figures is a must. Paint will chip away easily from castings that are not primed.

Starting with skin tones

At last, it's time to paint! I use acrylic hobby paints for a number of reasons, but primarily because they are water soluble, making them very easy to work with. I've painted figures of all types for more than 25 years, and over time have amassed a large collection of paints in a variety of colors from various manufacturers. I'd suggest beginning with Polly Scale's railroad and military line of colors if you're just starting out.

When painting figures, I like to use the "in to out" technique. As shown in the left-hand photo, you start by painting the details that are deepest into the surface of the figure casting and work your way out along the layers of clothing and details. This means that most figures will start with the skin around the face, chest, arms, and legs. Though the hands are at the extremities, I like to do those at the same time. It also means that you don't need to be all that careful

in the early stages of painting, since the outer edges of your work will be covered by the next layer of paint.

As shown in the center photo, I've applied a basic skin-tone paint to the face and hands of the engineer. To give the face more detail, and to keep the skin from appearing as one solid color, I next apply a wash of reddish-brown paint over the skin tone. The wash can be anywhere from a 50/50 mix of paint and water to hardly any paint at all – it depends upon the figure. The more paint you use in the wash, the ruddier the complexion. For women and children, I use very little red, as they generally have fairer skin. The red wash is also good for hands, as it brings out the detail of individual fingers, should the casting have them. I let the wash dry before continuing.

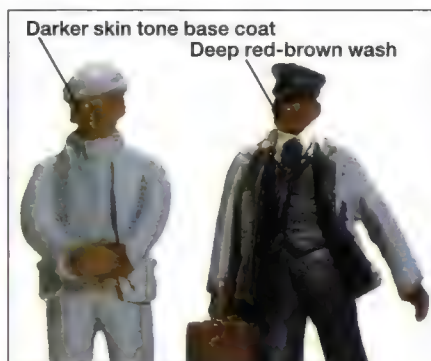
On darker-skinned figures, such as African-Americans, I start with a deeper skin tone as a base coat and then use a much darker red-brown wash, as seen at right.



David uses the "in to out" technique, painting the innermost parts of the figure and working outward in layers.



Apply a reddish-brown wash to the skin color to bring out facial features and individual fingers on hands.



For darker skin tones, start with a darker base coat and apply a deeper red-brown wash to the skin.

Light-colored clothing

It's possible to carefully paint hundreds of figures in solid colors and never be happy with how your work looks once you've finished. That's because you've used solid colors.

The key to adding realism to your painting is to include highlights and shadows. The three-step process below shows how to achieve that result with three shades of paint. This technique works best for light-colored clothes, so I'll use the white shirts on the station staff figures.

I start by painting white shirts with a solid coat of an off white, such as ivory. Once that base coat has dried, I paint the shadow areas a darker shade of off white. You want something slightly darker than your base color, but not too dark to make it look like the shirt has stripes. The color I've used in my example is sort of a light shade of oatmeal. I use

the folds and creases sculpted into the figure as my guide to placing shadows. Sometimes I'll hold the figure under a strong lamp, so I can see where the shadows occur naturally. I then fill them in with paint accordingly.

Finally, I use a lighter shade than my base coat to add highlights to the fabric. In this case I used pure white. I apply the highlights sparingly, using the drybrushing technique.

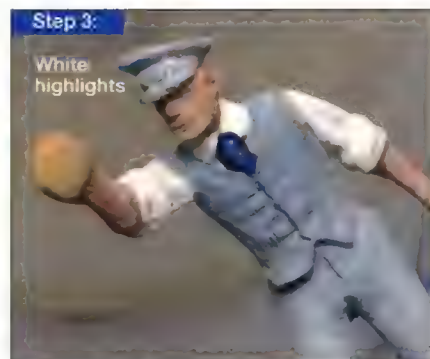
Drybrushing involves dipping the tip of the brush into the paint, wiping most of it off on a piece of cardstock or paper towel, and then lightly applying the remaining paint to the high spots on the figure. I use the highlight color to bring out the crease in the folds in the clothing, as well as any broad, flat surfaces that would receive a lot of light. You can do the same thing with other light or bright colors, such as yellow.



To paint light objects, start with a base coat of the middle tone. In this case, David used an ivory color.



Next, fill in the shadows with a darker shade of off-white paint. On the white shirt, David used a light taupe.



Finally, drybrush the highlights using a color that is lighter than the base color, like the pure white shown here.

Shading dark clothing with washes

You can easily bring out details in a figure's clothing by using washes. A wash is an application of diluted paint, and when applied to a figure or model, the pigment gathers in the recesses, such as in the folds of clothing, providing a contrast to the base color. Washes are particularly effective when you are working with dark blues, grays, and browns, and can even be used with black. Washes also work great for creating leather effects, such as coats, boots, and bags.

For this example, I'll use the blue overalls on a trainman figure, shown below. I started by painting the overalls a solid medium blue, as shown in step 1. Once the paint dried, I mixed a wash of 1 part dark blue paint to 1 part water and flowed the diluted color over the base coat, as shown in step 2. The finished result is shown in step 3. (I used the same

technique for the man's jacket.) After the wash dried, I highlighted the overalls, as explained on the next page.

You need to use care when working with washes. First, because washes are thinned paint, they will want to spread to other parts of your work. Using small brushes to apply a wash will help you control how much gets on the figure and where it goes. If you think you have applied too much, you can lift excess wash material from the figure by touching the liquid with a dry paintbrush.

The second thing to keep in mind is that you want to maintain a wet surface until you have the wash completely in place. If the wash dries in an area before you finish applying it, the pigment will tend to collect along the edge of the wash. In this case, you'll need to do a bit of touch-up work.



As shown with these blue overalls, begin by painting the item with a solid color, in this case, a medium blue.



Next, make a wash of a darker shade of blue and carefully apply it over the base color with a small brush.



Finally, drybrush the overalls with the original medium-blue color to bring out the clothing's highlights.

Adding highlights and details

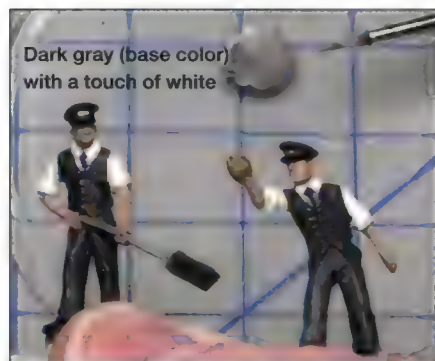
Even the lightest washes will darken the base coat on a figure, so you'll need to lighten the areas that would be natural highlights. There are several ways you can do this, and it depends upon your original base color as to which method you choose. For the blue overalls in the last example, the wash I used was very dark. As a result, I was able to use my original base-coat blue again as the highlight. Using the same drybrushing technique from the shirt example, I added the blue highlights to the figure's pants.

However, for the example figures shown here, their gray base coat was dark to begin with. Using the same dark gray color for the highlights after I'd applied the darker wash wouldn't make much difference. In this case, as shown in the left-hand photo, I added a hint of white to the original color to

produce a slightly lighter shade of gray. I then applied this color to the highlight areas.

When adding highlights, don't forget that there can be flat-area highlights (places without pronounced creases and seams) to paint as well. In the middle photo, I've applied highlights to the man's pants and vest.

Though these figures are small, a little extra detail goes a long way to making them look the part, especially considering that most figures are viewed at a bit of a distance. Both workmen in the right-hand photo have brass buttons on their vests, brass badges on their caps, and blue neckties. While these details are just hinted at in the castings, painting them on the figures makes them look all the more realistic.



The highlight color for these figures comes from the base color with a hint of white added to it.



Area highlights are important too, such as those found on the pants and vest of this figure.



Simple details, such as the brass vest buttons, hat badges, and neckties shown here, add a lot to a figure.

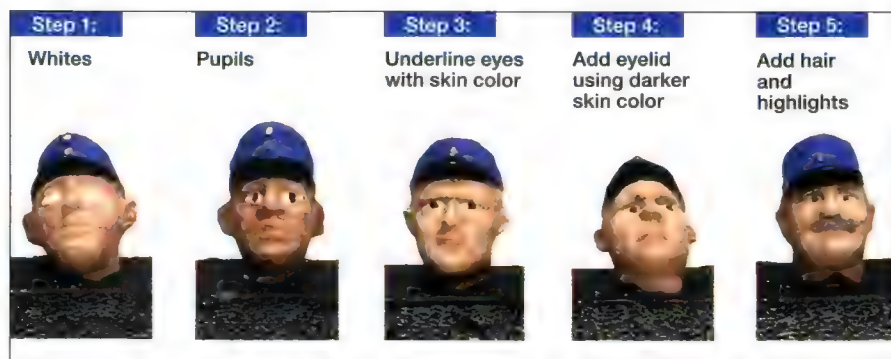
Eyes and facial details

Because scale figure eyes are so small, they are the hardest feature to paint. I don't bother painting eyes on HO scale figures or smaller. Even with very fine brushes, eyes on small figures are much too large, so I let the skin wash darken the eyes instead. However, for larger figures, eyes can be a very important detail.

The steps I use to paint eyes and finish the facial features on larger figures are shown below on a series of five 1:23.5 heads. You'll need a fine-point 10/0 paintbrush for this task. Be especially careful when adding pupils (step 2). You want to be sure that they are applied evenly for both eyes, so that the gaze of the figure appears natural and not cross-eyed (or worse). You can cover a lot of sins by making a figure look slightly to the left or right, but not straight ahead.

While the 5-step eye process works great for large scale figures, I use an abbreviated version for smaller figures. On the 1:76 figures shown in the right photo, I skipped the eyelid step. The brims of the figures' hats make it difficult to paint eyelids, but from a normal viewing angle, the lack of that feature isn't visible, so it wasn't needed. Remember too, that in the photos shown here, you are seeing these figures much more closely than you do on the layout. Though their eyes appear too large here (because they are), they look just fine when viewed in the model scene.

One more thing you can do with washes and details, note that the man on the left has a 5 o'clock shadow. You can make this by applying a dark brown wash to the beard area of a figure's face. **MR**



These 1:23.5-proportion heads show the eye process from start to finish. Start by applying the whites, then draw the pupils as straight lines of color. Next, underline the eyes with the skin color, then use a darker shade for the eyelid.



These finished 1:76-proportion figures have simplified eyes with no over line. The 5 o'clock shadow is a brown wash.



The end of this road is hidden by a canopy of trees. Sam Swanson shares tips for disguising roads that end at the backdrop.

Model roads to look like they go on forever

Three tips for making roads appear to extend beyond the layout

By Sam Swanson
Photos by the author

I model Appalachia, which has many packed clay and soil roads. I've re-created several of these roads, which are primarily located along the railroad right-of-way, to provide leading lines to frame each scene. Having roads extend to the fascia is common and easy to model, but convincingly blending a road into the backdrop can be a little tricky. Here are some tips for disguising those roads to nowhere.

When I start working on the roads, I try to convey a sense of depth and avoid making a noticeable transition from foreground to background scenery. If

you plan to have several of these roads on your model railroad, make each one slightly different to avoid uniformity.

View blocks

Horizontal view blocks, such as the wood trestle shown above, help obscure the transition from foreground to background. For roads that curve sharply near the backdrop, use a vertical view block, as shown in the top illustration in **fig. 1**. A building or large tree would work well. Overhanging trees, as shown in the middle illustration, also suggest the road continues on.

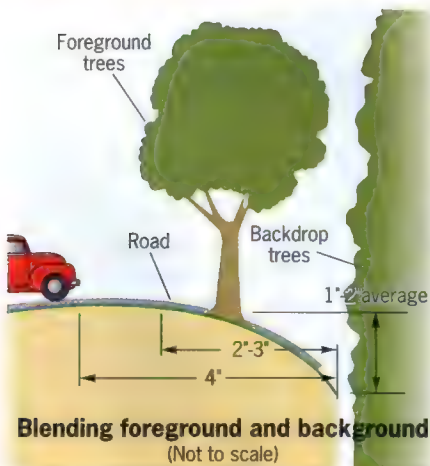
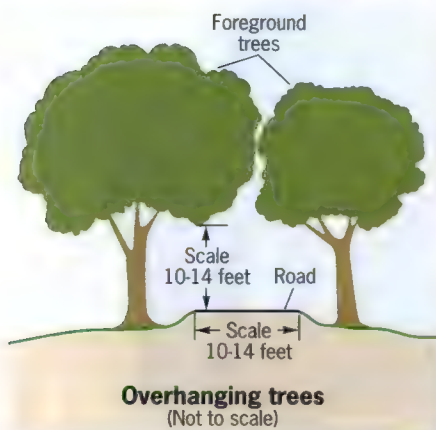
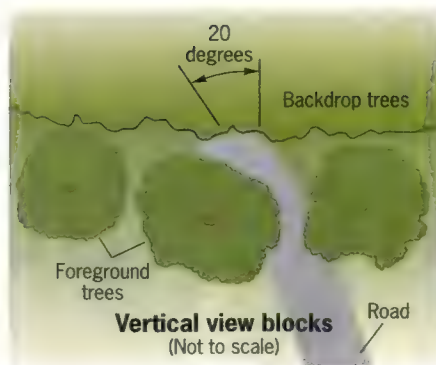


Fig. 1 Transitions. Vertical view blocks, overhanging trees, and vehicles can mask the end of the road.

If the road slopes before reaching the backdrop, as shown in the bottom illustration in **fig. 1**, use a vehicle to blend the transition from road to backdrop. To avoid crowding the transition, place the vehicle at least 4" from the backdrop. You can see an example of a completed scene in **fig. 2**. By using vertical view blocks, overhanging trees, and a vehicle, you'd never know the road ends a few inches past the bridge.

Team track

Sometimes a siding can be justified with an addition of a road, such as a



Fig. 2 Vehicles. By placing a vehicle at least 4" away from the backdrop, it avoids crowding the transition from the foreground. The end of the road, just a few inches past the bridge, is masked by a grove of trees.



Fig. 3 Team track. Angling from a canopy of trees, this road emerges to parallel a narrow gauge team track. The foreground trestle acts as a skewed view block and keeps the viewer a reasonable distance from the backdrop.

team track. All that's required is a short connecting road to the one paralleling the track, as well as the ability to hide the road's transitions. There won't be a need to connect the road with the front of the layout.

In **fig. 3**, I dropped the road about ½" before it enters the forest to help disguise the transition. I placed a dog in the scene (in front of the truck) to imply the road leads to the hill backdrop. Since it's walking toward the trees, the dog can take the place of a vehicle. You can achieve the same effect with people.

With the techniques presented here, seamlessly blending a road into the backdrop is not only easy, it's achievable. When finished, your model railroad will have more depth to it and look more realistic than before. **MR**

Sam Swanson is a civil engineer who specializes in the design and construction of water treatment facilities. His 11 x 12-foot model railroad shown in the photos is set in the 1930s and features standard and narrow gauge HO Appalachian logging and mining railroads. Sam lives in Cincinnati.

Kitbash a junction depot



This HO scale junction depot was kitbashed from a station kit and two signal towers. Follow along as Mark Preussler shares his techniques for modeling the fictional Wildebury Junction depot.

A station and two tower kits yielded this unique HO scale structure

By Mark Preussler

Photos by the author

Necessity is the mother of invention. That may be a bit too dramatic for the HO scale Wildebury Junction depot, but through the years, real railroads have done their part to uphold that well-known expression. As modelers, we too often search for ways to fit structures onto a layout, sometimes in spaces much tighter than the prototype had to deal with.

The impetus for this kitbash project began with a layout raffled off as a fund-raiser for the National Model Railroad Association's WinnebagoLand Division. After my brother, Marv, and I volunteered to construct the HO layout, loosely based on *Model Railroad-er's* Turtle Creek Central, it was soon time to add structures and final details. The junction scene, featuring two 90-degree crossings, was in need of an interlocking tower and a depot. So why not combine both in a unique, but simple, kitbash?

I used the Bachmann Plus Frankford Junction station and two Atlas signal towers to create Wildebury Junction. The former is out of production, but Heljan offers the same kit, called Smith's Creek Station.

The next time you need a compact building to fit a tight space, try kitbashing. Your imagination is the best tool you have when it comes to this task, so give it a try!

Mark Preussler's layout was featured in the July 2009 Model Railroader.

1. Depot wall modifications

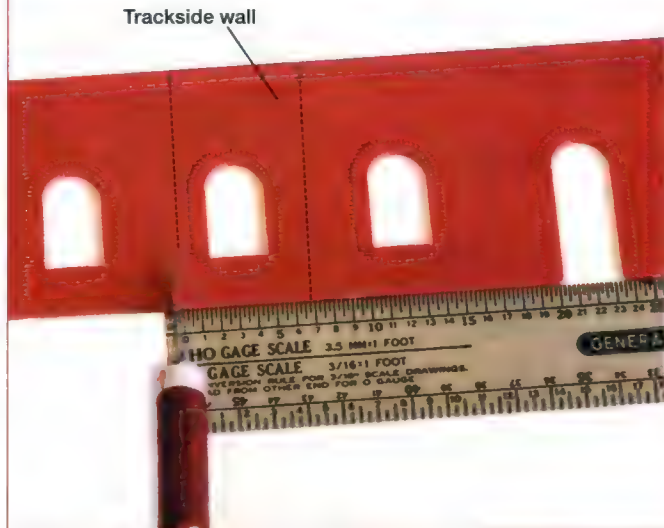


To accommodate a hip roof, I first removed the blank plastic above the bricks on the front and back walls. Then I used a no. 11 blade to cut the peaks off the end walls. I saved the peaks, though, and used them as a guide for the pitch on the new roof.

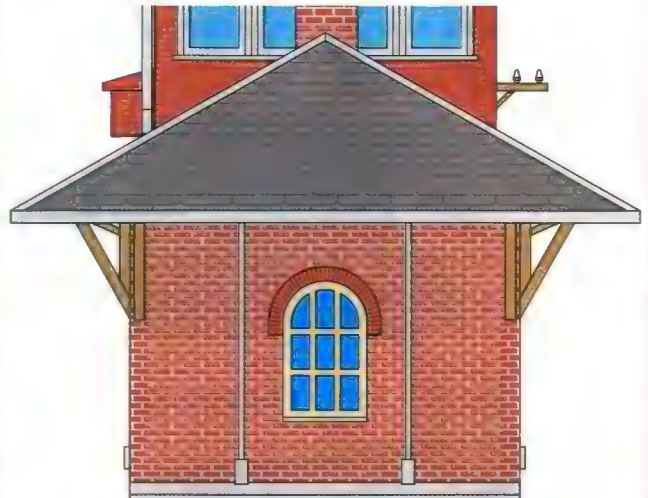


1. Depot wall modifications (cont'd)

Next, I modified the doors and windows. I used a hobby knife to cut a $1\frac{5}{16}$ ", or a scale 6'-9", section from the trackside wall. Then I cut the door section from the end wall. I used liquid plastic cement to attach the former end door opening to the trackside wall.

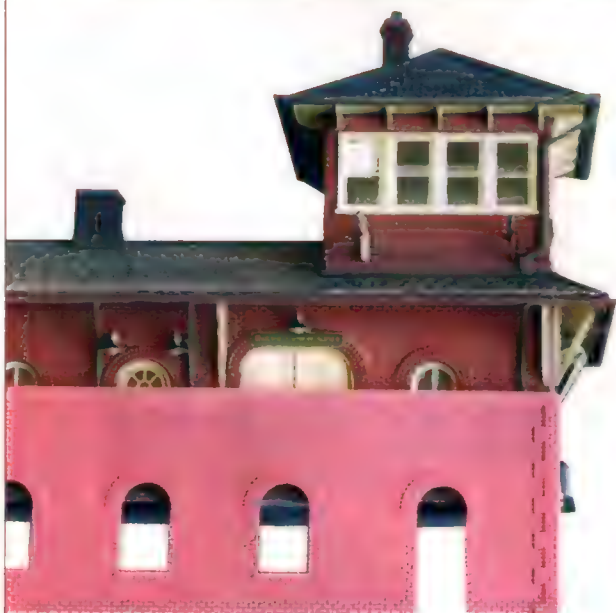


On the end wall, I centered the window removed from the trackside wall and made two additional cuts until the overall width of the end wall was $2\frac{3}{16}$ " (scale 16 feet). I used downspouts to hide the joints in the wall. See "Styrene gutters and downspouts" on page 51.



Illustrations by Theo Cobb

2. Freight house and overhead doors

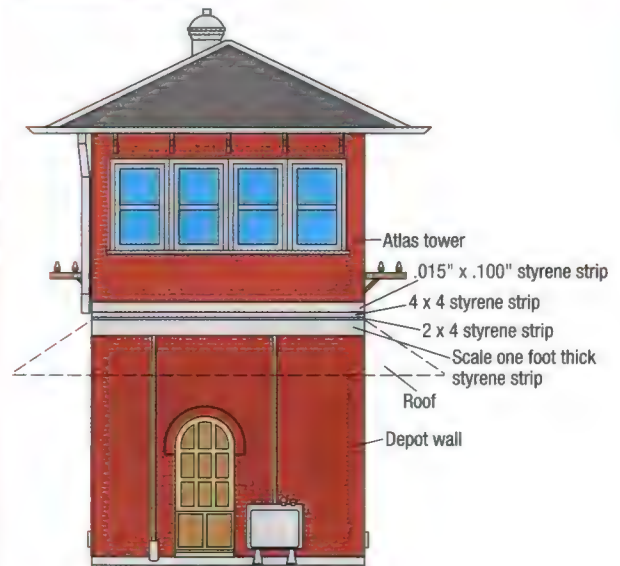


I further modified the depot walls by adding large doors. On the trackside wall, I modeled an arched door to match the adjacent windows. I cut out the door opening using a no. 11 blade, being careful not to damage the trim. Then I cut the trim in half and placed it at the corners of the opening for the new freight door. I used the Railway Express Agency sign to hide the fact the trim doesn't span the entire doorway.

On the other side of the depot, I installed a scratchbuilt overhead door. See "Kitbashing doors" on page 50 to learn how I modeled these two doors.

3. To the tower

Modified end wall



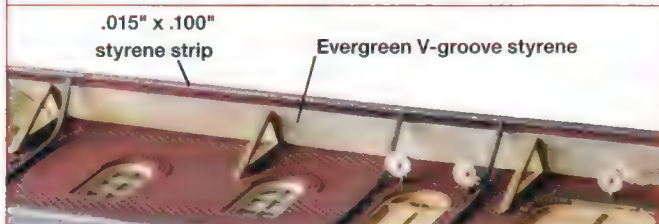
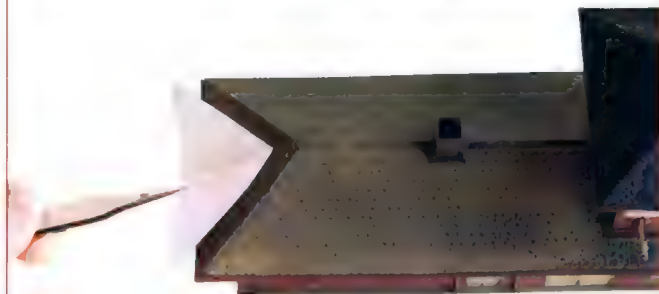
I needed two Atlas kits to model the tower. I used three walls from the first kit. Then I replaced the wall panel that comes with door and stairway detail with a window panel from the second kit. I left the roof and brackets off for now.

I then used liquid plastic cement to attach scale 1-foot-thick styrene strip to the bottom of the tower, as shown in the illustration above. The styrene raised the window trim above the roof line on the single-story side of the depot. Then I glued the tower to the depot and made sure the walls were flush.

4. Subroof and roof

Using **paper patterns** as a guide, I cut the subroof from .040" plain styrene sheet. The roof overhangs the depot walls by 1/2". I wasn't concerned about the subroof joints matching perfectly, as I intended to cover them.

Then, with a hobby knife, I cut Plastruct shake shingle roofing material to fit and attached it to the styrene with cyanoacrylate adhesive (CA). I then added the chimney.



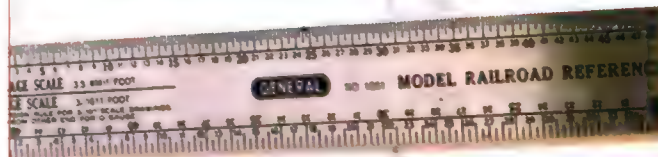
I **again used** paper patterns when cutting the Evergreen V-groove styrene for the soffits. I attached the styrene to the subroof with liquid plastic cement. The soffits not only add realism to the depot, but they hide imperfections in the subroof. Once the soffits were installed, I attached the brackets. (See step 5.)

Finally, I used .015" x .100" styrene strip for the fascia. I glued the edge of the strip slightly below the shingles so the bottom edge hangs below the soffit, just like prototype eaves.

5. Roof brackets

Bracket filed to fit

Bracket cut in half

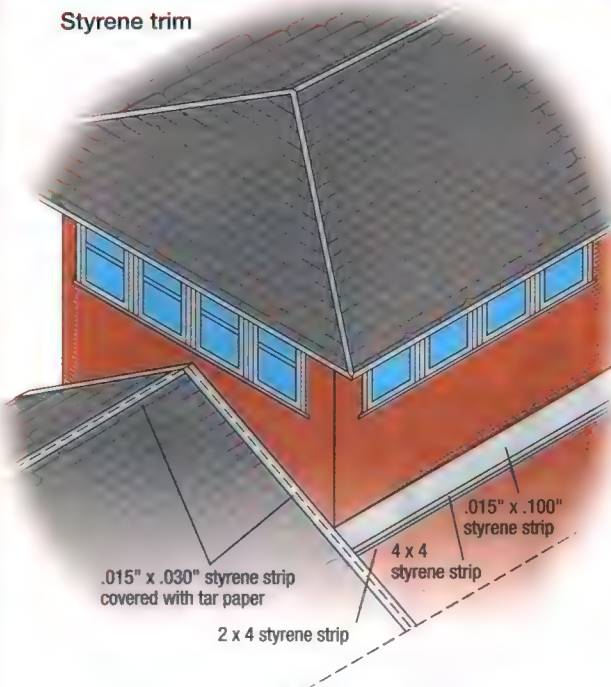


Original bracket

Though the depot kit contains eave brackets, they're too big for the new roof. I cut the brackets with a hobby knife, and then filed them to fit under the roof overhang.

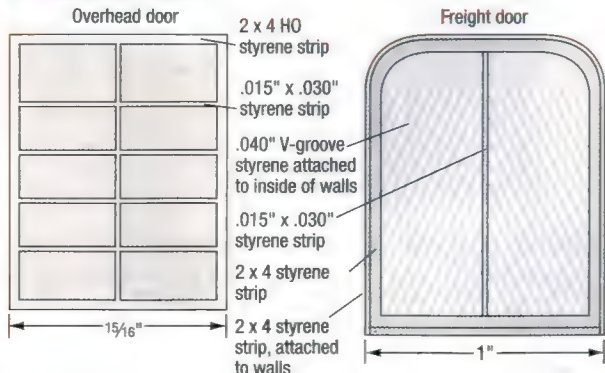
6. Tower details

Styrene trim



Kitbashing doors

Scratchbuilt doors



The doors included with the kit had heavy details, so I scratchbuilt new freight and overhead doors from styrene. The illustrations above show how I made the two doors. If you need multiple doors, make a master and then mold the part. — M.P.

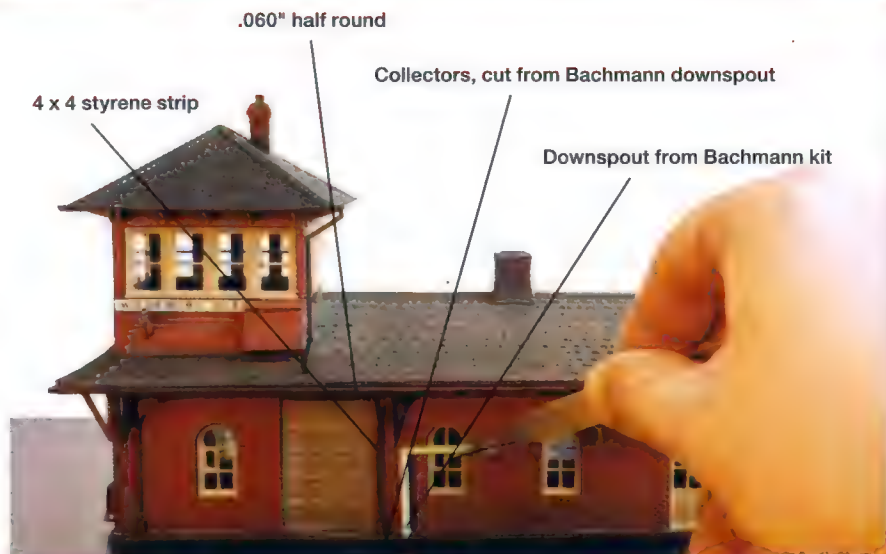
I **detailed the tower** with various sizes of styrene strip to model trim and flashing between the tower and the depot roof. First, I glued a piece of .015" x .100" strip to the tower's clapboard siding. Then I attached scale 4 x 4 strip to the .015" x .100" strip. Finally, I glued scale 2 x 4 strip between the styrene and the roof. This not only suggests trim between the roof and tower, but also hides any gaps.

Where the roof meets the tower wall just below the windows, I attached .015" x .030" styrene strip to the clapboard siding with CA. I then cut strips of Builders In Scale tar paper (no. 260) and attached it to the roof to represent flashing and valleys.

7. Styrene gutters and downspouts

Though the gutters included with the Bachmann kit were fine, there weren't enough of them now that the depot had a hip roof. Therefore, I used Evergreen .060" half round styrene to simulate gutters. [Styrene or brass channel can be used for gutters. If you use brass, you'll need to cement it to the plastic roof with CA or epoxy. – Ed.] I attached the styrene to the trim with liquid plastic cement.

I modeled the downspouts with 4 x 4 styrene strip. Instead of throwing away the kit's original downspouts, I cut them to fit and used them as collectors. You can see the finished gutters, downspouts, and collectors at right.

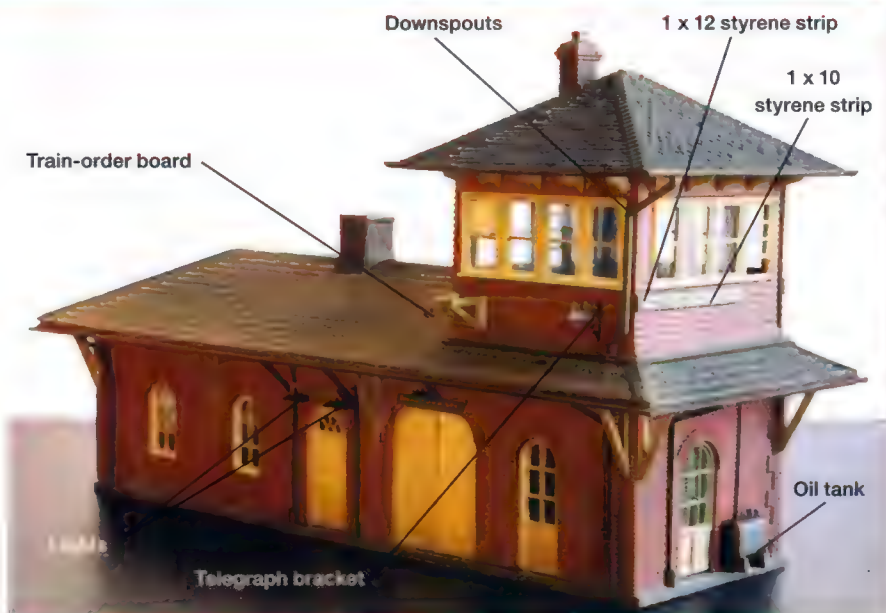


8. Paint and final details

I painted the depot and tower Floquil Boxcar Red. The windows and brackets are Floquil Aged Concrete. I used the same color to brush-paint the eaves.

Then I painted the roof and downspouts with Accu-Flex Weathered Black. I used black, brown, and gray powdered pastels to weather the roof.

The station signs are 1 x 10 styrene strip attached to 1 x 12 strip frames. The rest of the details, including the train-order board, oil tank, and tower downspouts, were all included with the Atlas and Bachmann kits. I used the non-operating lights, telegraph bracket, and Railway Express Agency sign to hide the joints from cutting the wall sections. **MR**



► Materials list

Accu-Flex paint
16-05 Weathered Black

Atlas
704 signal tower (2)

Bachmann Plus
35108 Frankford Junction Depot

Creative Model Associates
1017 outdoor lamps
1102 .015" bronze wire

Evergreen styrene
111 .015" x .030" strip
115 .015" x .100" strip
241 .060" half round
4050 V-groove siding sheet
8110 1 x 10 strip
8112 1 x 12 strip
8204 2 x 4 strip
8404 4 x 4 strip
9006 .010" clear sheet
9040 .040" plain sheet

Floquil paint
110016 Aged Concrete
110074 Boxcar Red

Microscale decals
90002 Railroad Roman letters

Plastruct
91656 shake shingle roofing

Vintage Reproductions
211 Railway Express Agency signs



Artistic license

on the **Great Northern**

An HO scale empire planned at sea, built in Vermont, and modeled after the Northwest

By Gustav W. Verderber
Photos by the author

1. Shay no. 5 pulls out of Shasta, Wash., on Jim Ferguson's HO scale Great Northern Ry. The locomotive has a string of empty log bunks to deliver to a logging camp on the Moose River Valley RR branch line.



Somewhere out in the Mediterranean, circa 1972, U.S. Navy Lieutenant Jim Ferguson sat at his desk aboard the aircraft carrier *USS Kennedy*, sketching track plans. While his shipmates reminisced about loved ones back home, Jim distracted himself from the routine of his seven-month deployment by planning his dream version of the Great Northern Ry.

Ferguson drew inspiration from layout feature stories printed in *Model Railroader* and other modeling magazines, which he says the U.S. military postal service delivered several months late, if at all. It was enough, though, to



2. The engineer of Great Northern Mikado no. 2300 advances the throttle as he prepares to hit the 2.5 percent grade west of Morningside, Wash. Morningside is the site of the main yard and engine terminal on Jim's freelanced layout.

keep him thinking and drawing during his 21½ years of service.

Jim retired from the Navy in 1976, and two years later he and his wife, Pat, moved to the Green Mountains of northern Vermont. There, in a round house (no, not a roundhouse) in a grove of maple trees, Jim started translating his sketches into reality.

From plans to action

During the winter of 1982-83, Jim made scale drawings of his sketches on drafting paper. He then enlarged them to full size, transferring them onto large sheets of butcher paper on the floor of a 21 x 35-foot room above his two-car garage. He made paper templates of Peco turnouts, taped them to the butcher paper, and then drew track centerlines to connect them.

With his main line thus plotted, Jim started building his benchwork so the L-girders, joists, risers, and legs would

leave room for the switch machines and electrical connections his turnouts would need.

The following winter, Jim transferred the drawings to sheets of ¾" plywood by punching holes through the butcher paper with an ice pick, then cut out the resulting track pattern with a jigsaw. He connected the L-girders, joists, risers, legs, and plywood subroadbed with sheetrock screws – lots of sheetrock screws. He also built shelves and drawers below the layout for his library of modeling magazines, videos, DVDs, records, scenery materials, kits, and tools.

Even as Jim started building the benchwork, Pat, a professional artist as well as a teacher, lent her artistic talents to painting the backdrop. Often, she had to stand inside the open benchwork to paint, ducking under the girders to back up and evaluate her work. So clear was Jim's vision of his layout



3. Consolidation no. 1246 spots two granite-laden flatcars on the Rockport, Ore., dock prior to arrival of the granite barge. The flat-bottomed barge is removable, and is placed in the scene only when needed.



4. The westbound through freight from Spokane will arrive in Morningside, Wash., soon and Great Northern F3 no. 260 will take over as head-end power.

– after all, he had almost 22 years to think about it – that he knew exactly where to tell Pat to paint mountains, meadows, farm scenes, hills, or a lake, before he laid a single piece of track.

Jim built his layout with Atlas code 100 flextrack, since some of his older steam locomotives had problems with smaller-profile rail.

Homemade ground foam

Jim's grandson contributed to the layout before he could walk. Jim used the cardboard boxes that once held his grandson's disposable diapers for the foundation of his scenery shell. He cut the boxes into strips, then wove them

into a web, glued them together, and stapled them to the benchwork. Reams of brown paper towels dipped in about 300 pounds of Hydrocal gave form to the topography.

To make his own inexpensive ground foam, Jim ground up an old foam rubber mattress with a hand-cranked meat grinder, then tinted the foam with clothing dye. After sprinkling his homemade ground foam onto a coat of wet brown latex paint, he added dried tea leaves, sifted soil, and steplebush seeds. The final layers are a variety of Woodland Scenics products.

Most of the thousands of trees on the layout, many made by Peter Eaton,

► The layout at a glance

Name: Great Northern Ry.
Scale: HO (1:87.1)
Size: 21 x 35 feet
Theme: freelanced GN
Locale: Pacific Northwest
Date: September 15, 1955
Style: walkaround
Mainline run: 344 feet
Minimum radius: 32" (main), 18" (industrial areas)
Minimum turnout: no. 6 (main), no. 4 (industrial)
Maximum grade: 2.5 percent (main), 3.5 percent (branch lines)
Track: L-girder
Height: 37.5" to 53"
Roadbed: cork and Homasote over 3/4" plywood
Track: Atlas code 100 flextrack, Peco turnouts, and some handlaid track
Scenery: Hydrocal hardshell over cardboard lattice
Backdrop: Sheetrock
Control: Digitrax Digital Command Control (DCC)

are local weeds like staghorn sumac, steplebush, meadowsweet, and gold-enrod. The trees are spray-painted and dusted with ground foam. While these make an impressive and economical



5. A pair of Electro-Motive Division F3s skirt past a farmyard with a heavy coal drag, heading eastbound toward the West Hill Division summit. The backdrop was painted on the walls by Jim's wife Pat, a professional artist.



6. Jim works at his workbench in the layout room. Behind him is the city of Broadview; Morningside's turntable and roundhouse are in the foreground.

forest in the background, a few Sterling Models trees placed strategically in the foreground give a convincing touch to the scenes and draw the eye.

Jim used a mix of homemade and commercial rubber molds for many of his rocks and ledges. He also hand-carved plaster in place.

Pat painted all the rock formations, using gray, black, tan, ochre, umber, raw sienna, orange, yellow, and white acrylics. She blended the colors directly on the rocks to achieve the desired effect. Misting the paints lightly with water as she worked allowed Pat to

blend the colors smoothly, as well as assuring that the paint would penetrate all the crevices of the castings.

Freelancing a prototype

Set in 1955, the year Jim joined the Navy, the layout draws inspiration from the Great Northern in the steam-to-diesel transition era. However, Jim has taken a great deal of artistic license with his freelanced Northwestern setting. The only place on his layout with a real name is Spokane, Wash., a hidden staging yard. From there, the plan meanders southwest to California.

Asked why he chose a Northwestern theme despite his Northeastern home, Jim offers aesthetic reasons. "I like the goat emblems and the Great Northern's colors on the trains," Jim says, "as well as the mountains and the colorful rock formations of the Pacific Northwest."

Many locations on Jim's layout have their own stories. For example, the festivities at Morningside are the result of Jim accidentally ordering the wrong assortment of figures to populate Main Street. When he opened the box, he found the figures were dressed in mid-19th-century clothing, not mid-20th. Instead of returning them, Jim draped a banner across Main Street announcing Morningside's centennial celebration, justifying a crowd of townspeople dressed in century-old garb.

In another scene, a railfan with binoculars ostensibly watches trains arrive and depart at Broadview. Follow the figure's line of sight, though, and you'll spot the skinny-dippers frolicking at the edge of a pond.

Operating with DCC

Jim originally set up the layout for cab control, with 31 blocks controlled by pairs of toggle switches selecting one of four throttles. Jim's friend, Russell DeMuth, built a train detector system. Two control panels indicate movement of the trains over the layout and control turnouts. Eventually, Jim incorporated tethered walkaround throttles, allowing operators to move around the room with their trains and eliminating the need for control panels.

Later, Jim switched over to Digi-trax's Digital Command Control system. To facilitate troubleshooting, he wired it into his existing block system, with all blocks set to a single cab. For additional security, he divided the layout into four power districts, each with its own circuit breaker. The train crew now operates most of the turnouts on the railroad manually as they follow their trains around.

To operate the layout, Jim came up with a schedule that features 17 trains. He uses car cards and waybills to route freight cars. A crew of 8 to 10 operators is a comfortable size group to bring the layout alive. Jim usually does the dispatching, but he doesn't use a fast clock. He wants everyone to enjoy operating the layout without the pressure of time.

Spokane to San Pablo

The twice-around main line allows continuous running for visitors, but during operating sessions, the layout is run as a point-to-point system. Trains originate either at the hidden Spokane staging yard or the tunnels at the south end of San Pablo.

Local freights make way for passenger trains and through freights as they pass across the layout stage. The four locals trade cars with the Fergus Falls branch line and the Moose River Valley RR, as well as serving various industries. Canadian Pacific traffic is interchanged at Broadview, and the Santa Fe meets the GN at San Pablo.

A typical Great Northern through freight originating at Spokane would take the right-hand leg of the wye and arrive on the layout stage at Morning-side. Climbing up a 2.5 percent grade on the West Hill Division, it would pass Scofield Junction, then after crossing the summit, start a gradual descent to Goat Lick Junction. After passing over a 150-foot Pratt truss bridge, the train enters a tunnel and a one-turn helix winding its way down to the long bridge over the Columbia River.

As the train crosses the bridge into Oregon and enters Broadview, it is now on the North Shore Division. The train enters the hidden yard, which this time around represents Edgewater, Ore., and continues through Rockport on to Eaton. From there it proceeds southwest to cross the California state line and eventually arrives in San Pablo, Calif.

San Pablo is a joint Great Northern and Santa Fe yard. Great Northern locomotives and cabooses are replaced here by Santa Fe equipment before trains continue into hidden staging on the south side of the room.



7. Workers at the Furstonline Foundry receiving building in Broadview, Ore., wait for a train to pick up the flatcar and deliver another load. Tracks that disappear under the overpass make the railroad seem to continue through the wall.

Help from his friends

Many of the locations on Jim's layout pay homage to the friends who, over the years, have helped him build his railroad empire. Among Jim's favorite locations is the industrial area at Eaton, named after his friend and fellow modeler, Peter Eaton. (Peter's HO Moose River Valley RR was featured in the July 2006 issue of MR.)

Jim was eager to create an urban area on this corner of his layout, but struggled with the track arrangement. One day, his friend Brian Whiton came to visit and took some measurements. Some time later, he returned with not only a track plan, but also three hand-built curved turnouts and a set of custom double-diamond crossings he built for the plan.

With multiple sidings, loading docks and buildings, Eaton now features 14 industries. To honor the man whose contributions helped make it possible, Jim named one of the major industries there Whiton Power and Light.

Jim's Great Northern RR is part of the Kingdom Rail Group, founded by Jim and Peter Eaton. The group includes private and club layouts on both sides of the U.S./Canadian border. Operating sessions rotate among the members from October through April.

Jim's skills as a model railroader are one thing. His passion for the hobby, his generosity in sharing that passion, and the way he helps others experience the model railroad adventure are truly his most lasting legacy. **MR**

Gustav W. Verderber is a nature photographer, author, and naturalist from Troy, Vt. He's been an avid model railroader ever since being introduced to the hobby several years ago by two of his friends, Jim Ferguson and Dr. John Wrazen. This article is Gustav's way of saying "Thanks, Jim." Gustav models the freelanced HO scale New England & Erie RR and the Baltimore & Ohio in Lorain, Ohio, in N scale.



» Meet Jim and Pat Ferguson

Jim was born in Chicago and traveled the world as an officer in the U.S. Navy. His wife, Pat, is a retired elementary school teacher, professional artist, and world traveler. She was born in Havana, Cuba. In addition to model railroading, Jim and Pat enjoy camping, boating, and bicycling, and continue to travel extensively.

Build a flatcar and shed from one boxcar



With a little kitbashing, Andy Clermont was able to convert a boxcar into a trackside shed and build a realistic maintenance-of-way supply car.

A pair of easy kitbashing projects based on Rutland RR prototypes

By Andy Clermont
Photos by the author

This maintenance car and accompanying trackside shed are both examples of how railroads recycle old equipment into new roles. In this case, the Rutland RR cut up a retired 40-foot steel boxcar and used its pieces to build this specialized track maintenance car and a storage shed.

Modeling the boxcar shed was mostly a matter of assembling a commercial kit body, modifying its details, and setting it on the ground. But that left a perfectly good boxcar underframe to use on something else. Being a proto-



This undated prototype photo shows Rutland track maintenance car no. X553 between jobs at Rutland, Vt. Bob's Photos-Collection of L. E. Lancaster

type modeler, I copied the Rutland and used the remaining parts to kitbash track maintenance flatcar X553. This car included a manually operated derrick to transfer the heavy frogs, guardrails, points, rails, and switch stands from the deck to the ground-level worksite for installation on a turnout.

Boxcar heritage

My models represent modifications made to one of the Rutland's 40-foot double-sheathed cars which had distinctive steel ends with inward-facing embossed end ribs.

These steel ribs were pressed into the car ends instead of the more common

method of having the ribs bumping out. This end wasn't unique to the Rutland, as other railroads under New York Central control had similar cars.

The boxcar was built to a NYC design introduced in 1916, but the Rutland car was built in 1924. This car has never been made in plastic by an HO scale manufacturer, but it has been offered as a resin kit, first by Dennis Storzak, then Des Plaines Hobbies, and it's now available from Westerfield.

Planning the project

Chateaugay, N.Y., was once home to several storage sheds made out of retired boxcars. Since I'm modeling this area, I wanted to include one of these sheds on my railroad.

The prototype boxcar was converted to its two new roles in 1944 at the railroad's shop in Rutland, Vt. Its carbody was removed, but a two-foot tall section of the bottom end panels had to be left in place. This portion formed part of the end structure that supported the draft gear and coupler box. It also created an end bulkhead that carried the car's safety appliances and hand brake stand.

Both side sills on X553 are easy to model as they're flat, and devoid of any rivet detail. All they required was grab irons, nut-bolt-washer (n.b.w.) castings, and stirrup steps.

The car had a wood deck, with a vertical steel post mounted in the center for the derrick. This derrick consisted of a round steel post, 10 feet tall, braced with angle iron supports that were welded in place. The crane boom extended 14 feet from this post, could swing off to either side, and was supported by a cable-and-pulley system.

Building the shed

I started by constructing the boxcar shed from an out-of-production Storzak kit. I cut two feet off the bottom of the car ends, **fig. 1**, and set them aside for the flatcar project.

If I were using a one-piece body like Westerfield's kit, I'd make cuts a scale two feet up the sides using the inside of the car end as a guide. See **fig. 2**. Then I'd fit a block of wood inside the body to support it for the end cut.

Next, I cleaned the flash off all the parts and drilled the holes required for the grab irons. I use a chuck mounted on the shaft of a can motor to drill small holes. The can motor has the advantage of being easy to hold, operates at slow speeds, and it stalls before I can break even the smallest of bits. It's also much quicker than using a pin vise by hand! See **fig. 3**.

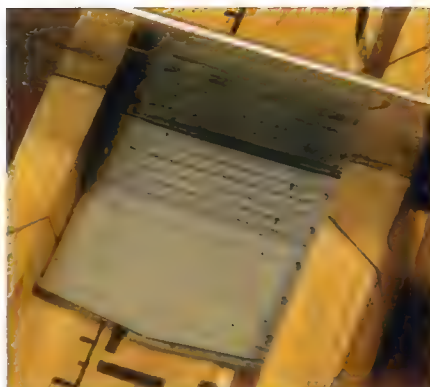


Fig. 1 Trimming the car ends. Using a miter box and a sharp razor saw simplifies trimming off a scale 24" from the bottoms of the cast-resin car ends.



Fig. 2 Carbody trimming. With a one-piece carbody, use the insides of the ends as guides for the razor saw cuts needed to trim off the lower ends.

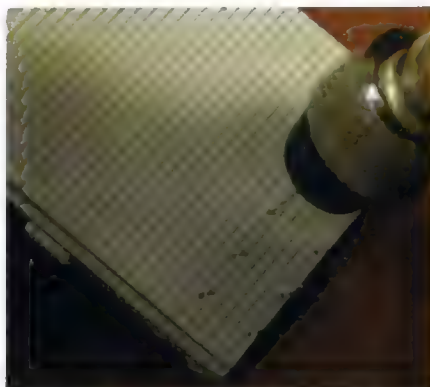


Fig. 3 Mounting holes. Andy uses a chuck mounted on a can motor to drill the numerous grab iron mounting holes in the car's sides and ends.

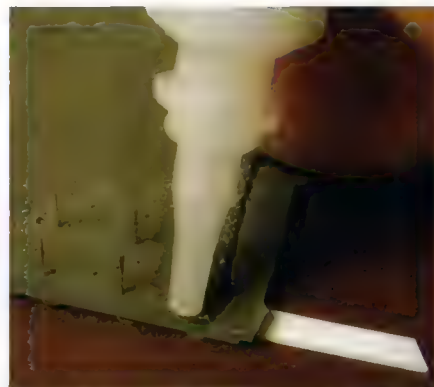


Fig. 4 Spacer strip. Slipping a strip of scale 2 x 10 through the grab irons helps ensure that they're all spaced uniformly before Andy applies the CA.



Fig. 5 Filler panel. Andy attached a panel of .040" styrene to fill the space where he trimmed off the boxcar ends to obtain the short ends for the flatcar.

After I'd drilled the holes, I installed the grab irons by sliding a strip of 2 x 10 styrene under the entire row to space them evenly from the body, as shown in **fig. 4**. Then I applied cyanoacrylate adhesive (CA) from the back. Once the CA dried, I straightened any misaligned grab irons with pliers.

I found the grab iron legs interfered with the corner assemblies, so I trimmed them off and filed them flush with the inside of the body.

Next, I squared up the remaining pieces of the body and assembled the box using CA inside the joints. I made .040" styrene patches to cover the openings in the bottom of the ends, as shown in **fig. 5**.

I finished the body following the kit instructions for the end, roof, and running board details. I left off the brake hardware, with the exception of the brake housing. I painted the carbody with a 50/50 mix of Floquil Boxcar Red



Fig. 6 Brake stand. Andy attached a piece of styrene channel to the car end to support the brakewheel housing and a pair of vertical grab irons.



Fig. 7 Derrick support. Andy mounted a styrene plate on the wood deck and detailed it with nut-bolt-washer castings to support the boom pivot post.



Fig. 8 Derrick parts. A couple of pieces of styrene channel, a length of bridge truss, and parts from a coal chute make up the derrick boom.

and Caboose Red. Then I applied C-D-S Rutland dry transfers, saving the kit decals for the flatcar.

I weathered the car heavily to give it the appearance of many years of service. To cover the patches in the ends, I stacked switch ties across one end of the car and added barrels and a switch stand to mask the opposite end.

Flatcar X553

To begin the flatcar I assembled the steel underframe according to the kit's instructions. The original boxcar was modernized in 1938 and again in the 1940s, but I chose to build my frog car with the old KC air brakes and T-section Bettendorf trucks.

To simulate thin sheet metal, I used a sanding drum in my Dremel tool to

taper the tops of both end pieces. I applied end grab irons, making sure to turn the top grab irons upside down. I smoothed and cleaned resin castings and cemented the ends to the underframe, with the coupler boxes aligned with the pads on the underframe.

Next, I cut and fit a pair of scale 4" x 8" styrene strips to serve as side sill spacers and cemented them along both edges of the frame. These strips fill out the underframe's side sills to match the width of the car ends. The pieces extend the width of the sills so the lower edge is even with the crossbearers.

Using scale 2" x 15" styrene strip, I made a pair of sides for the car, positioning them with their bottom edges a scale 3" above the bottom edge of the side sill strips cemented onto the un-

► Materials list

Westerfield

[Direct orders to 53 River Lane,
Crossville, TN 38555; 931-484-7233]
www.westerfield.biz
10157 Rutland boxcar kit

Cal-Scale

263 A-B brake housing and details

C-D-S Lettering

P.O. Box 65074, Nepean, Ontario,
Canada, K2G 5Y3
cdsletteringltd@sympatico.ca
428 Rutland 40-foot boxcar

Central Valley

19025 bridge box girders

Detail Associates

2206 eye bolts
2211 uncoupling levers
6206 brake hoses

Evergreen styrene

128 .020" x .188" strip
214 .125" rod
272 .080" I-Beam
291 .060" angle
8108 scale 1 x 8 strip
8208 scale 2 x 8 strip
9040 .040" sheet

Floquil paint

110003 Gloss
110010 Engine Black
110015 Flat Finish
110020 Caboose Red
110074 Boxcar Red

Kadee

5 magnetic couplers
554 Bettendorf T-section trucks
2030 Ajax Brake Wheel

Northeast Scale Lumber

3014 2 x 8 basswood

Tichy

8003 coal chute kit

derframe. This left a narrow lip that the stirrup steps could be attached to. I drilled holes in the sides for grab irons, nut-bolt-washer castings, and stirrup steps, and secured them with CA.

I made the brake stand from 5/32" styrene channel, wire grab irons, and an Ajax brakewheel, housing, and chain pivot, as shown in **fig. 6**. I then attached the brake stand assembly to the B end of the car and added air hoses and uncoupling levers made from eye bolts and brass wire.



Fig. 9 Derrick braces. Additional angle bracing competes the derrick's base. Then Andy painted and weathered the boom before installing it on the car.



Fig. 10 Final touches. Andy completed the frog car by applying a wood deck, adding some common track hardware, and weathering everything.

Derrick fabrication

My derrick is built around a vertical post I made from a piece of $\frac{1}{8}$ " styrene rod, 10 feet tall, with the upper end tapered to a scale 9" diameter. I made a scale 42" x 54" base from .040" styrene with a $\frac{1}{8}$ " hole drilled in the center. I added n.b.w. castings to all four corners and mounted the post in the center hole, shown in **fig. 7**. Then I braced the post with six pieces of .060" styrene angles.

I used parts from a Tichy coal chute to simulate the rigging on the derrick. I used the small pulleys with scale 2 x 4 styrene to make the tension sheaves. The boom has 36" sheaves at the post end and smaller 24" sheaves at the working end of the boom.

Figure 8 shows how I fabricated the 14-foot boom from I beams, a section of Central Valley bridge webbing, and styrene strip. I notched the top end of the I beam and used the Tichy chute brackets to attach the rigging to the end of the boom. I trimmed the chute gears and used them at the post end of

the boom. See **fig. 9**. Finally, I assembled the crane with carpet thread cables and mounted the assembly on the deck.

Finishing up

I sprayed the model with Floquil Engine Black, followed by Clear Gloss to provide a smooth surface for decals. Next, I applied the decals supplied in the Westerfield kit, let them dry, and followed up with another coat of gloss to hide the decal film. Then I added a coat of Flat Finish and the flatcar was ready to add the deck boards. I finished the deck with scale 2 x 8 lumber stained with a mixture of India ink and rubbing alcohol. My last step, **fig. 10**, was to install a deck load of chain, rails, switch stands, and switch frogs. **MR**

Andy Clermont is an HO modeler with a life-long interest in the Rutland RR. His 23 x 39-foot layout reflects that the past three generations of his family all worked for the Rutland. He and his wife, Susan, live in Albany, N.Y., with their four children: Matthew, Don, Trevor, and Liz.

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Richard Bohlman built this freight house and retaining wall from cardstock kits that he downloaded from paper card model Web sites on the Internet and printed himself.

Build realistic cardstock structures

Discovering the advantages of online cardstock building kits

By Richard Bohlman • Photos by the author

For me, one of the real joys of model railroading is building scenery that sits along the railroad right-of-way. However, the older I get the harder it's become to see, paint, and build many of the smaller details found on trackside structures. I solved this problem with cardstock kits and have developed a passion for this style of modeling.

Kits available on the Internet

Constructing models in HO, N, and O scales from cardstock has often been overlooked here in the United States but has a long and popular history in Europe. Traditionally, cardstock models were only available as printed kits and texture sheets for modelers. But with the growth of the Internet, anyone can buy these kits and texture sheets.

On the Internet, you can purchase buildings, tunnels, retaining walls,

streets, shops, and even street signs constructed from cardstock and paper.

After buying a kit, the product is supplied to you either as a download or a CD that is mailed to you. Typically, digital cardstock kits are supplied as a PDF (Portable Document Format), which allows you to download, open, view, and print your kit. After downloading the PDF file, you can print it on your own color printer or take it to a copy shop for printing.

One benefit of a paper card model received in this manner is that if you make a mistake while building the kit, you can simply reprint the areas needed and continue building. Another advantage of digital cardstock modeling is the unlimited potential to build a kit as many times as you like; or you can customize the kit to suit your layout with control over the height and length. This serves as a big advantage for both scratch-

building or large construction projects. Also, many of these kits feature detailed interiors and include tips to enhance the overall appearance of the completed structure.

The typical cardstock structure has a high level of photo quality detail already printed on the cardstock – no painting is required, just cut, glue, and position it on your layout. See **fig. 1**.

Constructing the kit

There's a refreshing element about building cardstock kits, and you can get a good taste of this by starting with one of the many free models that can be downloaded online. The small freight house, shown above, is available at Scalesscen.com. It includes illustrated instructions, which makes it a good starting point for beginners. For other kits, see the list of paper card model Web sites on the upper right.



Fig. 1 Helpful tools. With a basic selection of tools and kits printed out, you're ready to start building. If you make a mistake you can print another kit.



Fig. 2 Paper sheets. A small selection of some of the scratchbuilding sheets available from cardstock suppliers. Though only HO scale sheets are shown, sheets are also available in a variety of scales.

Tools and tips for cardstock modeling

Figure 2 shows a variety of supplies useful for constructing a cardstock structure. A basic tool kit for building paper structures includes:

Cutting tools – A hobby knife with a sharp blade works well, but change the blade regularly as paper blunts knives quickly. Also, a cutting mat and a metal straightedge prevent the blade from wandering.

Adhesives – A glue stick can attach the paper sheet without wrinkles, while cyanoacrylate adhesive (CA) is great for quickly applying plastics. For wood, white glue is the best choice.

Markers – Fine tip colored markers in gray and brown tones are handy to color any white edges.

Tweezers – Use these to position smaller elements and avoid gluing the parts to your fingers.

Sandpaper – Both sandpaper sheets and sanding sticks are useful for smoothing edges.

Spray varnish – Use a matte finish to protect the surface of the cardstock from moisture and fading.

Artists' soft pastels – Blend black or brown tones on a sheet of paper, then rub the powder into the corners and joints of the model with a soft brush.

The complexity of the models range from beginner to advanced. For the advanced modeler looking for a challenge, these models allow for flexibility and creativity.

For the novice modeler, each kit supplies thorough step-by-step directions, and illustrations are typically provided to guide you through the scratchbuilding process.

Scratchbuilding supplies

Online cardstock suppliers such as Scalescenescenes.com, Paper Creek Model

Works, and Clever Models are a real gold mine for scratchbuilders. All provide a wide range of realistic texture sheets available in common model railroad scales, as shown in **fig. 2**, that can suit any layout.

These texture sheets are excellent when you're scratchbuilding a trackside structure that isn't available as a cardstock kit.

Another option is to use software from Evan Designs called *Model Builder*. This program lets you position walls, windows, doors, and trim on your

Paper card model Web sites

Scalescenescenes.com
<http://www.scalescenescenes.com>

Clever Models
<http://clevermodels.com>

Paper Creek Model Works
<http://www.papercreek.com>

Bill Jones
http://billjones_9.tripod.com
 Paper-Model-Elevator.html

Evan Designs
<http://www.modeltrainsoftware.com/Modelbuilder.html>

IGS Hansa
<http://www.igshansa.de/igsorg.html>

computer screen. You can then print the walls for easy assembly.

So the next time you admire another layout, check the scenery closely. You may discover that some of the structures on the layout are made from cardstock. **MR**

Richard Bohlman is a veteran of the Navy and Coast Guard. Due to frequent military relocations, his layouts have been limited to 4 x 8s. Now retired, he lives with his wife, Charlotte, in Louisville, Ky.



An industrial layout in a box

This large scale layout packs a detailed scene and operation into a 2 x 4-foot space

By Brian Rudko • Photos by the author

1. Industrial switcher no. 3 pulls out of Pender Steel & Iron Supply Co. on Brian Rudko's large scale micro layout. Brian built his 1:24-proportion industrial railroad, including several detailed structures, in just 2 x 4 feet.

When model railroaders think of big industry, most think of a large and expansive layout modeled in HO or N scale. Taking a different approach, I've modeled an industrial complex in a compact space using mainly large scale (1:24 proportion) equipment. For one thing, the layout was small enough to be completed in a reasonable amount of time, rather than stay in a half-finished state. My 2 x 4-foot layout also gave me the opportunity to detail a single scene to the maximum.

I designed my layout after finding the Micro/Small Layouts for Model Railroaders Web site put together by Carl Arendt at www.carendt.com. Carl has gathered a world-wide community that shares track plans and ideas.

I restricted my Pender Street layout to a 2 x 4 footprint, but struggled with

PENDER STREET MILLS



PRO MODELBUILDERS

2. Inspired by *Model Railroader* author Iain Rice, Brian enclosed his small layout in a shadowbox. This frames the scene and focuses the viewer's eyes on the front of the layout.

picking a scale and gauge combination. After searching Carl's site, I decided on 1:24-proportion equipment that runs on scale 15" gauge track. Although 15" gauge is an unusual prototype, it's used in small lines serving agricultural and industrial settings. More importantly, 15" in 1:24-proportion is about the same width as On2½ (and HO scale) track.

Track plan

The setting of my layout is an in-plant industrial line for a freelanced metal foundry located in my home city of Vancouver, B.C., Canada. The metal foundry is named for the street where my business is located, Pender Street. The period of my layout is the 1950s.

Inspired by planning ideas from *Model Railroader* contributor Iain Rice, I enclosed the layout in a shadowbox so that the main point of view could be from the front.

Although my layout is compact and doesn't have a main line, I designed it for operation. There are two hidden staging tracks along the rear. A two-track transfer table in the office building brings rolling stock from the staging tracks to the two visible tracks that run under the gantry crane.

A hidden sector plate allows access to a track that connects to a stub-ended track that runs along the front of the



3. A switcher pulls a flatcar loaded with pipes across the plant. Brian scratch-built or kitbashed most of the rolling stock on the layout.

layout. [See "Building a sector plate and transfer table" on page 68. – Ed.]

Benchwork

I made the benchwork from ½" plywood with 4" tall sides. It's a bit heavy, but I wanted a sturdy structure. Originally there was no bracing, but that was a mistake, and I added a cross brace underneath. I also raised the main surface to align with the tops of the sector plate and the transfer table.

I made the shadowbox from ¼" plywood pieces glued to the benchwork. For added reinforcement, I used 2 x 2s as

More on our Web site

Brian Rudko scratchbuilt and kitbashed one-of-a-kind freight cars and locomotives for his layout. See photos of his complete roster on the Web at www.ModelRailroader.com.

Pender Steel & Iron Supply Co.

Large scale (1:24)

Layout size: 2 x 4 feet

Scale of plan: 2" = 1'-0", 12" grid

Numbered arrows indicate photo locations



View block

Two-track transfer table

N scale building

Office

Billboard

Water tank

HO scale building

Plant building

Backdrop

Gantry crane

Alignment posts

Sector plate

Illustrations by Theo Cobb

The layout at a glance

Name: The Pender Steel & Iron Supply Co.

Scale: 1:24 proportion, 15" gauge

Size: 2 x 4 feet

Theme: urban industry

Locale: Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Era: 1950s

Style: island

Mainline run: none

Minimum radius: 30"

Minimum turnout: Peco no. 4

Maximum grade: none

Benchwork: 1/2" plywood tabletop

Height: 50"

Roadbed: 1/2" foam board

Track: Peco On2 1/2 flextrack

Scenery: 1/2" foam board

Backdrop: painted styrene

Control: single DC throttle

needed. There is no top, and the sides have openings for track access.

My layout is 50" above the floor. I built a separate stand for it, made from hardboard and 2 x 2 lumber. While the layout is only 2 x 4 feet, it needs a couple of extra feet all around it so that it can be operated easily and comfortably, making its footprint closer to 6 x 8 feet.

Buildings and scenery

John Wright's Proto:87 Federal Street inspired much of the scenery and structures on my layout. You can see more of his layout in the May 2003 MR.

As much as possible, I chose to fill the shadowbox with building surfaces. The only visible painted backdrop is a bit of sky. I used buildings of three different scales (1:24-proportion and HO and N scales) to force the perspective and make the scene appear deeper.

I estimated the dimensions for the buildings and used foam core mock-ups to get all the proportions correct before I built the models. Commercial 1:24-proportion buildings are available but pricey, so I stuck to scratchbuilding.

First I made acrylic cores that I covered with various commercial styrene sheet sidings. The 1/4" acrylic sheet of the substructure is heavy and is best cut and shaped with power tools.

Finding 1:24 wall and detail parts took some research. Internet modeling forums provided me with a good start, and I found some information on 1:24 model Web sites. Dollhouse suppliers also sell some useful 1:24 details.

I kitbashed the office building using 1:24-proportion walls and detail parts from Main Street Heritage Models (www.mainstreet-heritage.com). The



4. Brian incorporated forced perspective make his layout appear deeper than it is. He placed an HO scale warehouse (left) and N scale office building (right) along the backdrop.

HO and N scale structures are also kit-bashed to fit. The larger structure is a Walther's HO American Hardware Supply kit that I lengthened by laying the two long sides end to end.

The most distant building is an N scale Hilltowne Hotel kit from Design Preservation Models. I stacked the two sidewalls and two end walls together, making a taller structure. The back walls are blank plastic since they aren't visible from the front. This building sits on the office roof behind the billboard to appear farther in the background.

Rolling stock

Two locomotives run on my layout. I built switcher no. 3 using a resin kit from Thomas A. Yorke Design Studios (www.thomasayorke.com) and a two-axle diesel chassis from Model Power. The resin parts in the kit come with wear and tear detail marks cast into them. Though the switcher looks great, I don't run it often, as the locomotive's low pilots can hang up on the pavement.

My other locomotive is a Bachmann On2½ gas-mechanical switcher, which I modified for my 1:24 operator figure. This switcher runs quite well.

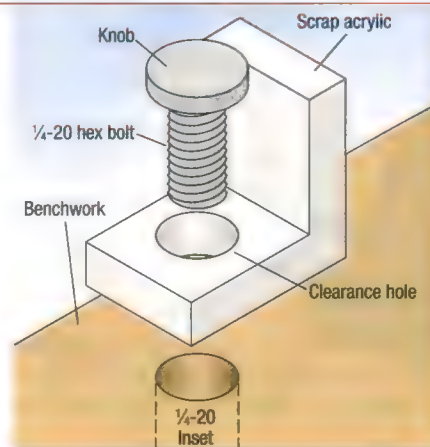
Quick Connect Hardware for structures

I used Lee Valley ¼"-20 quick connect hardware (www.leevalley.com) to attach the structures to the benchwork. All the components are the same size and designed to work together. Using this system, I can easily remove structures from the layout for maintenance.

First, I drilled ¼" holes in the benchwork where I wanted to locate the structures. Then I added a ¼"-20 threaded insert into each hole.

For each structure I made two L-shaped styrene brackets with a ¼" hole drilled through one leg. Then I used cyanoacrylate adhesive (CA) to attach the brackets to the structure.

I line up the holes in the brackets with the holes in the benchwork and



insert a plastic knob capped ¼"-20 screw that I finger tighten until the structure is steady. — B.R.

For my freight cars, I started by building a batch of underframes from laser-cut acrylic. I also cast my own truck journals. I used a jig to assemble the frames and then installed Kadee no. 58 couplers.

With the frames built, I made several different carbodies for them. So far I've built a few flats and a tank car. I've also shortened a Bachmann On2½

flatcar and scratchbuilt a pipe load for it. I use On2½ Bachmann dump cars as is — they're small but seem to work visually.

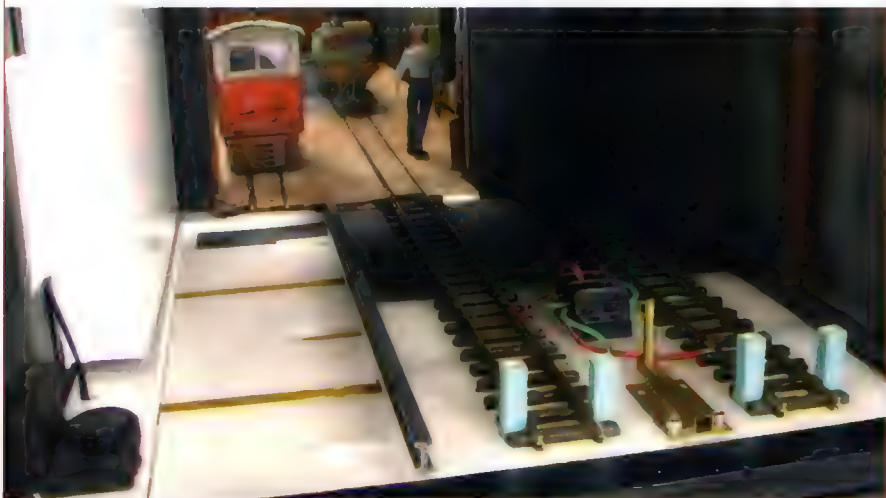
Track and control

I used Peco On2½ flextrack but covered it with simulated asphalt or cobblestone so the small ties aren't visible. The asphalt is Sculptamold, and the

Building a sector plate and transfer table



5. Brian uses two locator posts to align his sector plate with the track.



6. The transfer table brings rolling stock from two hidden staging tracks to the front of the layout. The view block (right) moves with the transfer table.

A sector plate is a track or tracks mounted on a board that is pivoted at one end so it can match up with two or more approaching tracks. This easy-to-build device serves as a space-saving hidden turnout. For my sector plate, I used Peco On2½ flextrack on a length of ½" thick PVC plastic, and the plate pivots on a ¼" audio plug and socket.

Rather than estimate the alignment to the tracks every time I moved the plate, I used inserts and ¼" bolts to limit the travel and locate the track accurately and efficiently.

The transfer table is on the opposite end of the layout from the sector plate and it is made from two acrylic plates. One has grooves that I cut in it on a table saw. I cemented brass channel into the grooves to guide the top plate.

The top plate has two lengths of large Plastruct strips cemented to it, and these fit into the brass channels. The whole idea is that the plate slides freely. I also used some homemade latches as locators. Wires run through a slot in the base of the transfer table to supply power to the track. — B.R.

cobblestone pavement is made from Plastruct sheet.

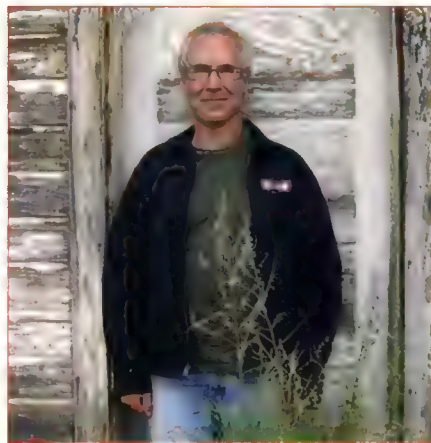
For layout control, I use a DC power supply with a handheld throttle. Since I run only one locomotive at a time, I didn't need anything more. I soldered two feeders to every section of track and connected them to a central bus.

For sound on my layout, I installed a sound board filled with prerecorded machine-shop sounds from Miller Models. I mounted the module, an on-off switch, and a 3" speaker into a plastic electronics box that I attached to the backdrop. Appropriately, the sounds emanate from the plant building. Eventually, I'd like to add sound in the locomotives, and at some point, design a formal operating scheme.

Not quite finished

Though my layout is nearly complete, I still have several items on my to-do list. First, I want to model an interior office scene on the second floor of the brick office building. The space is quite visible through those large windows, and I've built a removable box for the interior, including miniature fluorescent lights. I also enjoy detailing Preiser figures, so I'll add more of those to the scenes.

Finally, I look forward to building more locomotives. I have a Model Die Casting two-axle chassis, which will be perfect as it's a smooth runner. Even though my layout is limited to a 2 x 4-foot space, I'll have a lot of fun operating and detailing it for years to come. **MR**



Meet Brian Rudko

Brian Rudko has been passionate about model railroading since he was a kid. His modeling interests led him to a job as a professional model maker at Pro Modelbuilders. He now owns and runs a model shop in Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

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Wiring your layout, part 1: track bus

It's often said that wiring a layout for Digital Command Control (DCC) is as simple as connecting two wires to your track. Though that may be true on some small, simple track plans, it's usually a bit more complicated than that. If you can wire a layout for direct current (DC), you'll have no problem wiring it for DCC. However, there are some things you must pay attention to.

Digital Command Control power boosters supply more current than traditional DC power packs, sometimes as much as 5 or 10 amps, because they power more than one train at a time. This current needs to be supplied to several locomotives simultaneously without losing too much voltage.

The voltage from a booster can vary between brands. Sometimes the voltage is adjustable, but it's typically around 14V. If the voltage at one end of the layout is just a couple of volts different than on the other end, there will be a noticeable difference in locomotive speed. So what's the difference between current and voltage, and how are they related?

Ohm's Law. Electrical properties are sometimes difficult to understand because we can't see what's going on inside the wires. It's sometimes easier to think of a

garden hose. Electrical current is like the amount of water flowing through a hose and voltage is like the pressure of the water in the hose.

There's a direct relationship between voltage, current, and resistance in an electrical circuit. It's defined by the equation $V = I \times R$, where V is the voltage

measured in volts, I is the current measured in amps, and R is the resistance measured in ohms. The resistance on your railroad is caused by the rails and any wires between the booster and locomotives.

Though nickel silver (an alloy of brass) is the most common metal used for scale rails, it's a poor conductor of electricity. I measured

the resistance of some code 83 rail and found that it was .057 ohms per foot. That doesn't sound like much, but on anything except the smallest layout, it adds up quickly. At 5 amps, one piece of 3-foot flextrack fed at one end can cause a voltage drop of 1.7V at the other end because the current must travel three feet down one rail, through the locomotive, and return three feet down the other rail. That's enough to cause a noticeable drop in speed.

There isn't any difference in rail resistance between DC and DCC. What is different is that on a model railroad with DCC you have to

supply current to many locomotives through the same set of rails. If you run only one HO or N scale locomotive around a large layout with a single pair of wires, it's unlikely you'd see a difference in speed. But there's another reason for concern.

Feeding a medium to large layout with a single pair of wires is a safety hazard. Since DCC boosters are capable of delivering high amounts of current, they have circuit breakers built into them. In order for the circuit breaker to work, it must be capable of detecting the high current of a short circuit. If a short occurs at the other end of the layout, the resistance of the rail can be too high for the circuit breaker to respond promptly to the increase in load. The booster will continue to supply full current to the short without tripping the circuit breaker. That short-circuit may cause the plastic ties of a turnout to melt, as shown in **fig. 1**, or distort a die-cast metal wheel. Even worse, it may start a fire.

Wiring the track bus. To prevent these problems, a track bus needs to be added. This is a pair of heavy gauge wires beneath the layout that roughly parallel the track. Copper wire has a lower resistance than nickel silver rail and efficiently delivers current to your locomotives.

The track bus is connected to the track every few feet by smaller gauge wire called track feeders. Most DCC system manuals have a recommendation for wire size.

Basically, the longer your bus and the larger your track booster,

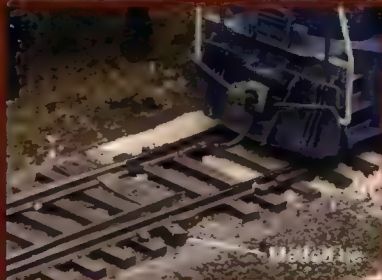


Fig. 1 Melted ties. If a circuit breaker doesn't respond immediately, a short-circuit may cause the plastic ties to melt.

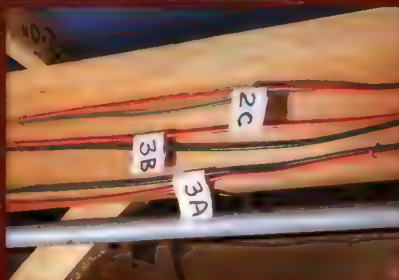


Fig. 2 Bus wires. The Milwaukee, Racine & Troy has 12AWG bus wires that roughly parallel the tracks above.



Fig. 3 Easy connection. Scotchlok insulation-displacement connectors provide a solder-free way to connect the bus to the feeders.

the heavier gauge wire you need. The heavier the wire, the smaller the gauge number. For example, 12AWG (American Wire Gauge), shown in **fig. 2** on the opposite page, is heavier than 14AWG wire. I use 14AWG bus wires on my HO layout with 5-amp boosters. These wires have $\frac{1}{20}$ the resistance of code 83 rail. Larger scales, longer runs, or more powerful boosters should have heavier bus wires.

The gauge of the track feeders depends on the size of the rail. Generally, use the largest gauge you can and still have the solder joint on the web of the rail be invisible. I use 22AWG wire for the feeders on code 83 rail. The higher resistance of the smaller gauge wire isn't a problem if the feeders are kept under about 6" in length.

An even worse conductor of electricity than nickel silver rail is a rail joiner. I try to solder a track feeder on every large section of rail and solder the rail joiners on shorter sections. I don't recommend soldering every joiner as some serve as mechanical expansion joints. Rail and benchwork will expand and contract with temperature and humidity changes.

There is a mixed opinion between manufacturers on twisting the bus wires to lessen radio interference. There won't be any detrimental effects if you twist your wires together. Some of the wires on my model railroad are twisted, others aren't.

To prevent short circuits, it's best to color code your track bus and feeders. The National Model Railroad Association standard

decoder wire color code uses black as the left-hand rail pick-up and red for the right-hand rail. I carried that forward to my layout wiring. I use black wire for the south rail track bus and track feeder and red wire for the north.

I've used solid and stranded wires for bus wires and found both to be suitable. The solid wire stays bent to an angle or curve, so it can run parallel to the track below the benchwork, but stranded wire is easier to use with Scotchlok insulation-displacement connectors (suitcase connectors). I use the Scotchlok IDCs, shown in **fig. 3**, to connect the bus wires to the track feeders. For the feeders, I use stranded wires.

Snubbers. Digital Command Control signals aren't shaped like normal AC waveforms found in house wiring. The rising and falling edges are straight instead of curved. When they're sent through long track buses they can be distorted, which could lead to damaged decoders.

Some manufacturers suggest placing a snubber, as seen in **fig. 4**, at the end track bus to help dampen the distortion. This is a simple circuit consisting of a resistor and capacitor in series. NCE recommends, and Digitrax sees the merit of, a .1 μ F capacitor and a $\frac{1}{2}$ -watt resistor somewhere around 50 to 150 ohms.

Testing. Once your layout is wired, it's important to test it to make sure that the circuit breaker on the power booster trips properly. This can be done by placing a coin across the rails in various places, including the farthest point away from the power booster. If the breaker trips (indicated by beeping or flashing lights), the wiring is okay. If your bus is heavy enough wire but your circuit breaker doesn't trip, there may be too much resistance in the circuit, so try adding more track feeders. **MR**

Send your questions about Digital Command Control to DCC Corner, *Model Railroader* magazine, P.O. Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187, or e-mail dcc@mrmag.com. We regret we can't answer all the questions we receive.

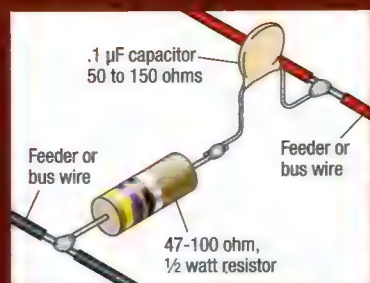


Fig. 4 Snubbers. A capacitor and resistor can help dampen the distortion of DCC signals.

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Product Reviews



Class J in HO scale features realistic sounds and prototype-specific details

Available in accurate early or late versions, the HO scale Norfolk & Western class J from M.T.H. Electric Trains is a great-looking model of one of the most recognizable locomotives to run on North American rails. The model includes the M.T.H. Digital Control System (DCS) for realistic lights, sounds, and smoke on DC, DCS, or Digital Command Control (DCC) layouts.

Prototype. Norfolk & Western's Roanoke Shops built the first five class J locomotives (nos. 600-604) in 1941. They built six more (nos. 605-610) without streamlining in 1943, designating them class J-1. After World War II these engines were streamlined and re-designated class J. The last three Js (nos. 611-613) were built in 1950 and were the last 4-8-4 Northern-type steamers built in the United States.

Averaging 15,000 service miles per month, the streamlined 4-8-4s hauled the N&W's *Pocahontas* and *Powhatan Arrow* during the postwar years. By the late 1950s diesels took over passenger duties on the N&W, and many class J engines were relegated to freight service. By 1959, the railroad retired all of the Js.

From 1982 until 1994, class J no. 611 led excursion trains as part of N&W-successor Norfolk Southern's

steam program. After NS discontinued the program it donated no. 611 to the Virginia Museum of Transportation, where it's still on display.

Appearance. Almost all of the dimensions of the M.T.H. model match prototype drawings in *The Model Railroader Cyclopaedia Vol. 1: Steam Locomotives* (Kalmbach Publishing Co.). The gap between the locomotive and tender is about two HO scale feet longer than the prototype, which allows the M.T.H. class J to negotiate 18" curves.

The M.T.H. class J engines are built primarily of die-cast metal. The molded detail matches prototype photos and drawings.

Separately applied parts include the handrails and throttle linkage. As on the prototype, there are openings on top of the model's streamlined boiler for the whistle, safety valves, Nathan low-water alarm, and check valves. The solid pilot has a swing-out scale-size non-functioning coupler, which can be replaced with an included operating coupler. The no. 600 also has a bell in front of the safety valves.

The cab interior has an impressive amount of detail, including painted gauges and valves on the backhead, green-painted cab walls and ceiling, window glazing, and positionable roof vents. Painted

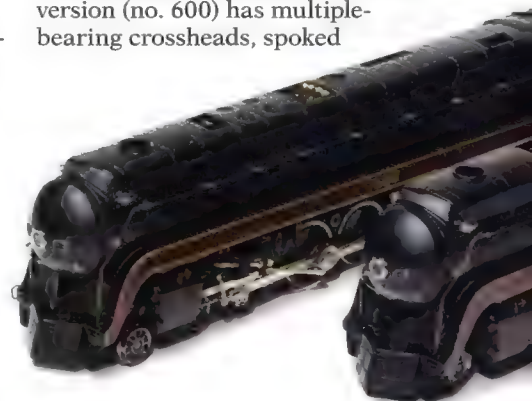
engineer and fireman figures are also included.

The locomotive and tender are painted satin black. The widths and placement of the Tuscan Red stripes and the gold pinstripes and lettering match the prototype.

The window sash is correctly painted a light shade of red. The handrails and stanchions, as well as the headlight and classification light housings, are plated steel.

The only painting discrepancy I found on either model was on no. 600. The topmost louver on the front of the boiler top casting was unpainted. All five of these louvers should be silver.

Early and late versions. The early version (no. 600) has multiple-bearing crossheads, spoked



The early version (left) has spoked pilot wheels and other accurate details.

74 Con-Cor International
HO scale *Electroliner*

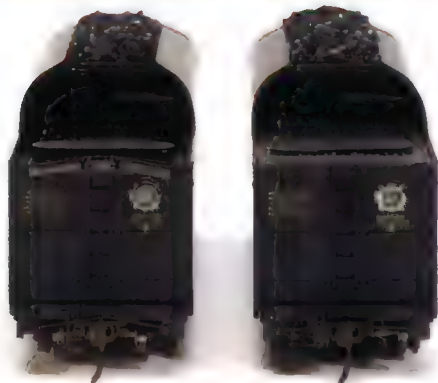
76 Walthers HO scale transfer table

78 ExactRail Vert-A-Pack in HO

80 True Line Trains N newsprint boxcar
Woodland Scenics HO service station

82 Athearn N scale PS-2 covered hopper
Roco Digital Starter Set in HO scale

Dana Kawala



The early version tender has an arched deck, while the late version has a flat deck.

pilot wheels, and a class D tender with an arched deck. The late version (no. 611) has alligator-type crossheads, solid pilot wheels, vents in the front shroud, and a class D tender with a flat deck.

The plated metal bell is located under the left front pilot step on no. 611. The bell was moved to this location on all class J locomotives beginning in 1953.

The separately applied builder's plates for each model are legible under magnification, and the construction numbers and dates are correct for each prototype. The tender numbers (no. 220076 for no. 600 and no. 220165 for no. 611) are also correct for each model, according to an N&W tender assignment list in Vern French's *Norfolk & Western Ry. Williamson Terminal 1953* (Highlands Station).

Mechanism. A can motor with a brass flywheel is inside the model's boiler. A dogbone-style driveshaft transfers power from the motor to a gearbox on the third driver axle, and both third drivers have traction tires. Siderods transfer power to the other drivers. As on the prototype, the M.T.H. class J has tandem main rods.

There is a single downward-facing speaker in the tender. One of my favorite features of M.T.H. HO scale steamers is the wireless drawbar connection between the locomotive and tender. A smoke unit on/off switch and a master volume control are under the tender's water hatch.

Speed tests. We tested the M.T.H. class J in DC using a 12-volt Model Rectifier Corp. Tech 4 power pack. The model can handle as much as 24 volts, exceeding the maximum voltage specified by National Model Railroad Association standard S-9.

In DCC and DCS modes the model accelerated to 74 scale mph. Prototype class J no. 610 reached 110 mph during a 1944 test.

Using an M.T.H. DCS Commander, I had the model moving in speed step 1 at 1 scale mph. Using an NCE Powercab DCC system, the class J's slow speed performance is smoother with 128 speed steps than with 28 speed steps. The model crept forward in speed step 1 at less than 1 scale mph.

Realistic effects. On DC, the model's lights, sounds, and smoke are limited to automatic effects. The sound of four chuffs per wheel revolution is synchronized to the motion of the drivers and the puffs of the smoke unit. Brakes squealed when I rapidly decreased the throttle. At rest, sounds such as the air pump play randomly.

The model has many more user-controlled effects when it's run on a DCC- or DCS-equipped layout. The deep "steamboat" whistle sounds like recordings that I've heard of the prototype no. 611. On a DCS layout you can "quill" the whistle using the controller's thumbwheel.

The 28 DCC functions include pulling out the coupler slack and a series of passenger announcements specific to the *Powhatan Arrow*.

The M.T.H. model has 10 configuration variables (CVs), which allows an operator a limited amount of fine-tuning to the engine's performance. I changed the long address to the locomotive number without any difficulty.

►► M.T.H. HO scale class J

Price: \$449.95

Manufacturer

M.T.H. Electric Trains
7020 Columbia Gateway Dr.
Columbia, MD 21046-1532
www.mthhotrains.com

Road numbers: (all Norfolk & Western) Early 1941 version: nos. 600, 603, 604. Late 1950 version: nos. 611, 612, 613

Era: Early version, 1941 to early 1950s. Late version: 1953 to 1959. (no. 611, to 1994)

Features

Automatically switches between DC, Digital Command Control, and MTH Digital Command System modes
Constant-voltage headlight
Electrical pickup on four drivers and all tender wheels
Engine and tender weight: 2 pounds 13.5 ounces
Fan-driven smoke unit
Five-pole skew-wound motor with brass flywheel
Metal RP-25 contour wheelsets in gauge
Minimum radius: 18"
MTH Proto-Sound 3.0 system operates on DC, DCC, or DCS
Operating classification lights
Optional drivers without traction tires
Sprung drivers
User-installed magnetic knuckle couplers at correct height

MTH HO scale class J

Drawbar pull		12.6 ounces	
		88 HO scale passenger cars	
Scale speed (DC)		Scale speed (DCC)	
Volts	Scale mph	Speed step	Scale mph
7.5 (start)	1.3	1	4
9	7.6	7	23
10	12	14	35
12	30	28	74
Current draw at 12 volts (DC)		Slipping	.34A
		Stalled	.45A

All the sound effects and smoke really bring this excellent-looking model to life. The attention to detail shown on the model is sure to please fans of this famous steamer.
—Dana Kawala, associate editor

More on our Web site

Current subscribers can watch a video of the M.T.H. class J and the Walthers operating transfer table at www.ModelRailroader.com.



HO scale *Electroliner* interurban is a great model of an intriguing prototype

With a sharp looking model of the Chicago, North Shore & Milwaukee's iconic *Electroliner* interurban, Con-Cor has captured the romance of what some call the golden age of the streamliner. The HO scale ready-to-run model is accurately detailed inside and out and can be easily converted to Digital Command Control (DCC).

A desperate gamble. The *Electroliner* was conceived as the North Shore Line's ticket out of bankruptcy. The road was desperate for cash after the lean years of the Depression, and its Chicago-to-Milwaukee traffic was under pressure from the Chicago & North Western's *400s* and the Milwaukee Road's *Hiawathas*. The interurban road's answer to those high-speed streamliners was one of its own.

Two all-electric, four-unit *Electroliners* were delivered to the North Shore Line in January 1941. They would become not only the line's symbol, but its salvation. They would also be its workhorses, making five trips a day apiece between Chicago and Milwaukee. The *Electroliners* racked up close to 3.5 million miles each over the next 22 years. And even after the North Shore Line ended operations in January 1963, the trains rolled on for nearly two decades more as the Liberty Liners of Philadelphia's Red Arrow Lines.

Con-Cor supplies reprints of two 1982 *Trains* magazine articles on the history of this fascinating train,

along with reproductions of brochures and timetables – a thoughtful extra.

Clean lines. The model accurately captures the distinctive appearance of the prototype. Its major dimensions match those on a builder's diagram reprinted in *Cars of the North Shore* (Central Electric Railfans' Association Bulletin no. 68, April 1947).

Our sample's paint was applied smoothly and evenly, matching the prototype's turquoise-and-salmon paint scheme quite well. The silver lettering, bordered in black, is crisp and opaque, as are the silver frames on all the windows.

In June 1941, a grade-crossing crash resulted in severe underbody damage to *Electroliner* 803-804. When the train was rebuilt, the North Shore added protective steel framing below the sides of the cars on both trains. Con-Cor's model depicts this *Electroliner*.

How slow can you go? In direct-current operation, at 3 volts – a typical starting voltage for many other locomotives – the *Electroliner* moved steadily at 3.4 scale mph. But the train actually started at a much lower voltage. At only 1.4V, the train crawled along so slowly two different speed gauges in our workshop failed to measure it. This means the *Electroliner's* low speed is less than the gauges' 0.1 mph increment – a testament to the model's smooth drive train.

At 12V, the *Electroliner* reached 91 scale mph, about the same top speed at which the prototype usually operated. (A real *Electroliner* once reached 111 mph, but that was under test conditions.) Even at this speed, the model ran smoothly and quietly.

The Con-Cor *Electroliner* has an eight-pin DCC decoder socket, and holes in the lead unit's floor for installation of a speaker. But as of this writing, the manufacturer is not aware of a DCC sound decoder that includes prototypically accurate *Electroliner* sounds. So DCC modelers will have to use a motor-only decoder or a sound decoder with recordings of another electric locomotive.

On the test track. Only the two axles on the model's lead unit are powered. One of those wheelsets is equipped with factory-applied traction tires to improve grip. All other wheels on the train pick up power, though.

Speaking of electrical pickup, the well-modeled sprung trolley poles on the train are wired. If you want to run the *Electroliner* on overhead power, simply remove the lead unit's body shell and flip a switch on the printed-circuit board under its roof.

On our sample, I found that five of the model's 10 wheelsets were out of gauge, being slightly narrow. I removed them from the trucks and twisted them back into gauge fairly easily.

HO scale *Electroliner*

Price: Four-car set, \$439.98;
extra coach car, \$139.98

Manufacturer

Con-Cor International
8101 E. Research Ct.
Tucson, AZ 85710
www.all-railroads.com

Road names: Chicago, North Shore & Milwaukee (two road numbers), Philadelphia Suburban Transit (two numbers). Also available painted silver but unlettered.

Era: 1941-1963 (North Shore Line), 1963-1982 (Philadelphia Suburban Transit)

Features

Constant directional lighting
(rear light switches to red based on direction of travel)
Detailed, lighted interiors
Eight-pin Digital Command Control decoder socket
Etched-metal windshield wipers
Flexible rubber diaphragms
Flush-fitting window glazing
Minimum radius: 10"
Painted motorman figures
Weight: lead unit alone,
5 ounces; all four cars,
13.5 ounces
Wired, sprung trolley poles
Wire grab irons

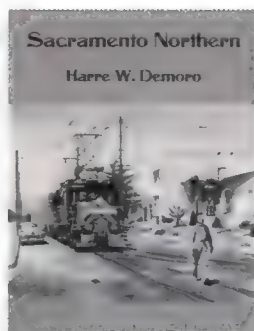
Con-Cor HO scale *Electroliner*

Drawbar pull		Scale speed (DC)	
	1.4 ounces	Volts	Scale mph
10 HO scale passenger cars		1.4 (start)	< 1.0
		3	3.4
Current draw at 12 volts (DC)		9	59
Slipping	.30A	12	91
Stalled	.34A		

The prototype was designed to handle the sharp curves of Chicago's famed elevated Loop, and the model is no different. Con-Cor says it can negotiate a 10" curve.

Though we don't have an HO test track with curves that tight here at MR, our sample *Electroliner* had no problems traversing the 18" curves, no. 4 turnouts, and multiple grade crossings of our Beer Line project layout.

Con-Cor's *Electroliner* is almost good enough to make a dedicated steam modeler like me think about stringing overhead wire. — Steven Otte, associate editor



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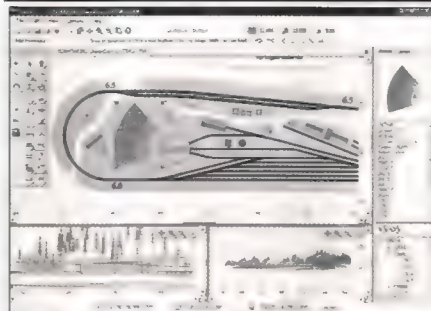
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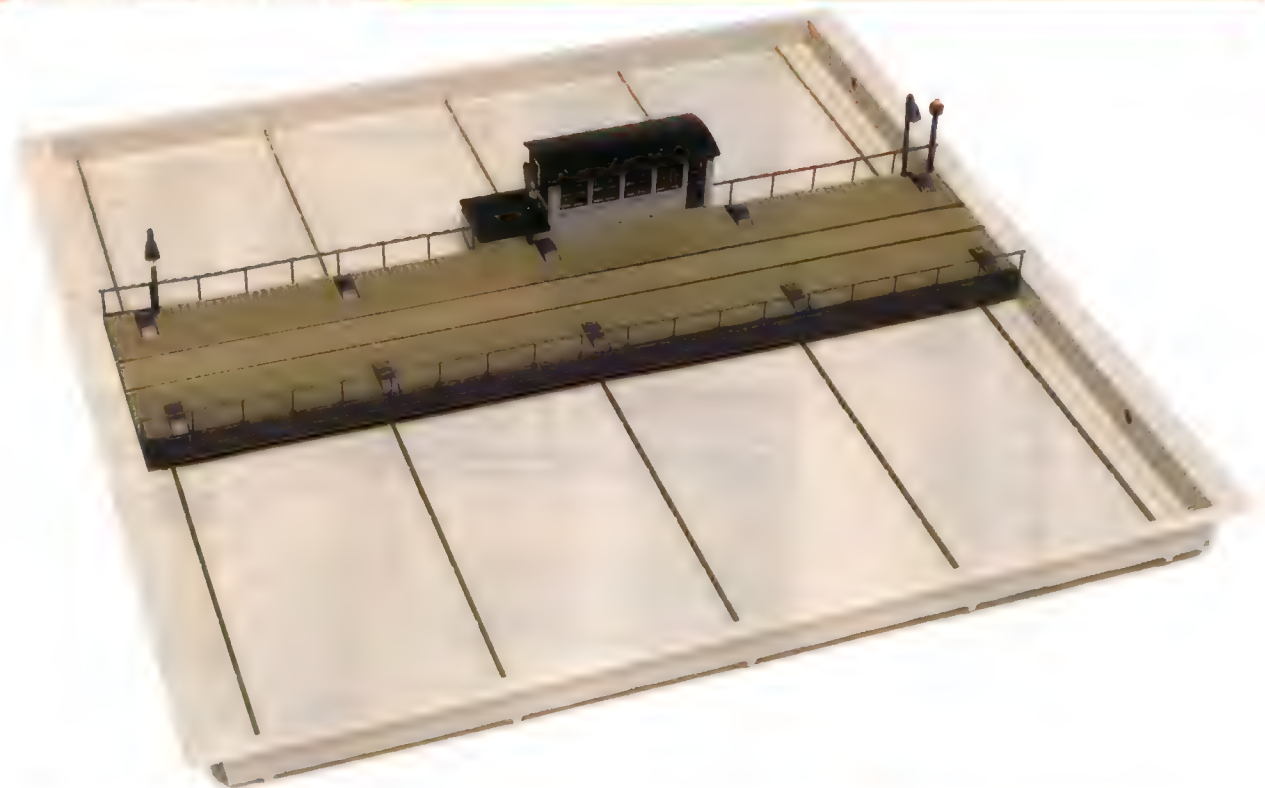
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Walther's HO transfer table adds action to shop scene

An operating transfer table is now part of the Cornerstone Series Built-Ups line from Walther's. The motorized plastic model also features operating lights.

Common at railroad back shops, a transfer table makes it possible for equipment to be moved laterally, eliminating the need for turntables and complex switching moves.

The Walther's transfer table has a 14⁷/₁₆" x 15¹/₁₆" footprint, and the pit extension measures 13¹⁵/₁₆" x 15¹/₁₆". A paper template is included for cutting the pit opening.



This handheld control box is for programming and operation.

For smooth operation, the pit needs to be mounted on a level surface. Approximately 1¹/₈" of clearance below the layout is needed to accommodate the pit and wiring.

Setting up the transfer table for DC operation is easy thanks to the clear instructions in the 20-page transfer table manual. Once connected, the display on the control box reads HELJAN, followed by the table's digital address and the number of positions the table is indexed for. After I set the table on the rails, I calibrated the table's 0 position following the instructions.

Then I programmed additional stops for the table. I scrolled through the menu options until PROG appeared. Next, I pushed the GO/SET button until PROG started flashing. I then used the up and down buttons to position the table. I pushed the up button once I had the table in its final position.

To save the position, I pressed the GO/SET button until the letter P appeared in the display window. I then used the up and down arrows to give the location its number.

» HO scale transfer table

Price: \$329.98; pit extension \$69.98

Manufacturer
Wm. K. Walther's Inc.
P.O. Box 3039
Milwaukee, WI 53201
www.walther's.com

Description
Motorized injection-molded plastic transfer table

Features
Bridge measures 100 scale feet
Compatible with Digital Command Control and Motorola

Pushing the GO/SET saves the location number.

With 48 positions, this transfer table can easily drop into an existing scene. The pit lip is designed for Walther's code 83 track. However, track from other manufacturers can be used, if shimmed for matching railhead height.

Working accessories add realism to a layout, and Walther's new transfer table will do just that. This model will enhance any shop scene from the steam era to the present day. — Cody Grivno, associate editor

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Product Reviews



Vert-A-Pac is well detailed

ExactRail's HO scale Vert-A-Pac is based on a prototype used by railroads during the 1970s to transport Chevrolet Vegas and other sub-compact cars. As the name suggests, the cars were loaded vertically, not horizontally.

Prototype history. The Vert-A-Pac was a joint venture between Southern Pacific and General Motors. The SP shops in Sacramento, Calif., built the prototype in 1969. Production cars were built by American Car & Foundry (ACF) and Pullman-Standard (with superstructures by Whitehead & Kales) in the early 1970s.

The Vert-A-Pac superstructure, mounted on an 89'-4" flatcar, had five ramp-like hinged door panels per side, each capable of holding three cars. For more on the Vert-A-Pac, see the October 1971 issue of *Model Railroader*.

The flatcar. Our sample Vert-A-Pac is decorated for Milwaukee Road. The model has smooth and evenly applied paint, and the printing is crisp and opaque. Factory-applied plastic signs bearing the reporting marks and Trailer Train lettering and logo are on the car sides.

The ACF flatcar's dimensions closely match prototype drawings published in the October 1971 MR. The model's couplers are mounted in pivoting pockets. Though the model will negotiate 22" radius curves, it will look better on broader curves.

The underbody has an air reservoir and ABD valve, with pipes connecting the two. The reduction valve shown in the drawings was omitted. Molded brake cylinders, brake pipes and hangers, and stirrup steps are on the bottom of the sill.

Though some Vert-A-Pacs rode on ACF-built flatcars, *Milwaukee*

▶▶ HO scale Vert-A-Pac

Price: \$29.95

Manufacturer

ExactRail

1053 S. 1675 W.

Orem, UT 84058

www.exactrail.com

Road names: Milwaukee

Road, Burlington Northern,

Denver & Rio Grande

Western, Florida East Coast,

Illinois Central, and Seaboard

Coast Line

Era: 1969-circa 1979

Features

28" wheelsets, correctly gauged

McHenry scale magnetic couplers, mounted at correct height

Weight: 7.4 ounces

Road Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment: Vol. 2 by Doug Nighswonger (Morning Sun Books, 2000) shows TTVX 802176 on a P-S flatcar.

Vert-A-Pac. The one-piece plastic superstructure has fine rivet detail, molded grab irons, and door handles. The end ladders and brake wheel are separately applied.

There were some discrepancies between the end lettering on the model and the prototype. On the model, EXCESS HEIGHT CAR is centered in the white band. On the prototype, it says NO RUNNING BOARDS on the left door and EXCESS HEIGHT CAR and TTVX 802176 on the right door.

The Vert-A-Pac fills a void for those modeling the 1970s. More than a dozen railroads operated this unusual auto carrier, and ExactRail has done a fine job recreating it. — C.G.

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Product Reviews

True Line Trains N scale newsprint boxcars



Price: \$27.95 each

Manufacturer

True Line Trains
Canadian Hobbycraft Ltd.
140 Applewood Crescent
Concord, Ontario L4K 4E2,
Canada
www.hobbycraft.com

Era: late 1960s to present

Comments: These well-done 50-foot newsprint boxcars are made by True Line Trains. The ready-to-run models capture the proportions of prototypes built by National Steel Car Corp. Drawings were published in the June 2002 *Model Railroader*.

These models have a one-piece body shell, individually applied ladders and wire door-closure rods, and molded underbody details. A sheet metal weight is concealed inside. The appropriate Youngstown plug doors are used for each paint scheme. Micro-Trains roller bearing trucks with Magne-Matic knuckle couplers are mounted with screws.

The boxcars come decorated in Canadian Pacific; Canadian National; Central Vermont; Duluth, Winnipeg & Pacific; and Boise Cascade color schemes. — *Jim Hediger, senior editor*

Woodland Scenics HO scale Sonny's Super Service



Price: \$34.99 (others in line range from \$29.99 to \$32.99)

Manufacturer

Woodland Scenics
P.O. Box 98
Linn Creek, MO 65052
woodlandscenics.com

Era: 1920s to present

Comments: Woodland Scenics fills a niche between standard styrene structure kits and factory-assembled ones with its new series of "Pre-Fab" kits. Sonny's Super Service depicts an early automobile service station. Others in the line are city storefronts.

The "Pre-Fab" name signifies the kit has just three main parts —

the central building, the snap-on service bay, and the roof. The unpainted kit also has dozens of molded plastic scenic details, a large sheet of dry-transfer signs, and clear window glazing.

The kit's globe-topped gas pumps are a style that was introduced in 1934 and lasted through the early '60s. The building could be dated from the 1920s through today by changing the pumps and other details.

Model railroaders who don't want to spend a lot of time building non-lineside structures may find a good balance in these simple-to-assemble kits. — *S.O.*

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Product Reviews

►► Athearn N scale PS-2 2600 hopper



Price: \$19.98 to \$21.98

Manufacturer

Athearn Trains

1550 Glenn Curtiss St.

Carson, CA 90746

www.athearn.com

Era: 1965-present

Comments: A Pullman-Standard PS-2 2,600-cubic-foot-capacity hopper is available in N scale from Athearn. The model matches prototype dimensions listed in *The Official Railway Equipment Register* (January 1978).

I was impressed with the see-through running board with individually applied hand grabs. The paint matches prototype photos. See www.athearn.com for a full list of road names.

The low-profile wheelsets are in gauge. The coupler height matches National Model Railroad Association standard S-2. The car weight matches NMRA RP-20.1.

The Athearn PS-2 is an accurate N scale model of its prototype. — D.K.

►► Roco HO scale digital passenger train set no. 6041273



Price: \$1,169.99

Manufacturer

Roco-Fleischmann

Modelleisenbahn group

Silvergate Distributors Inc.

9755 Birch Canyon Place,

Suite 200

San Diego, CA 92126

silvergatedistributors.com

Comments: The digitally controlled features on this HO scale German-prototype passenger set may make North American-prototype modelers a bit jealous. The locomotive and all three passenger cars feature realistic lights, sounds, and other user-controlled effects.

Using a Model Rectifier Corp. Prodigy Advance Digital Command Control (DCC) system, I raised and lowered the front and

rear pantographs of the *Deutsche Bundesbahn* E10.3 electric locomotive. I also opened the coach doors, using functions 3 and 4. The locomotive and coaches feature different German language station and conductor announcements.

The set also includes a multiMAUS digital controller, 110-volt power pack, 14 straight track sections, and 12 Roco R3 curved track sections.

We also ran the firm's HO scale Class 212 switcher. The switcher includes couplers that opened when I pressed Function 1 on our DCC throttle. You can watch a video demonstration of both products on the Web at www.ModelRailroader.com. — D.K. with Terry Thompson, publisher

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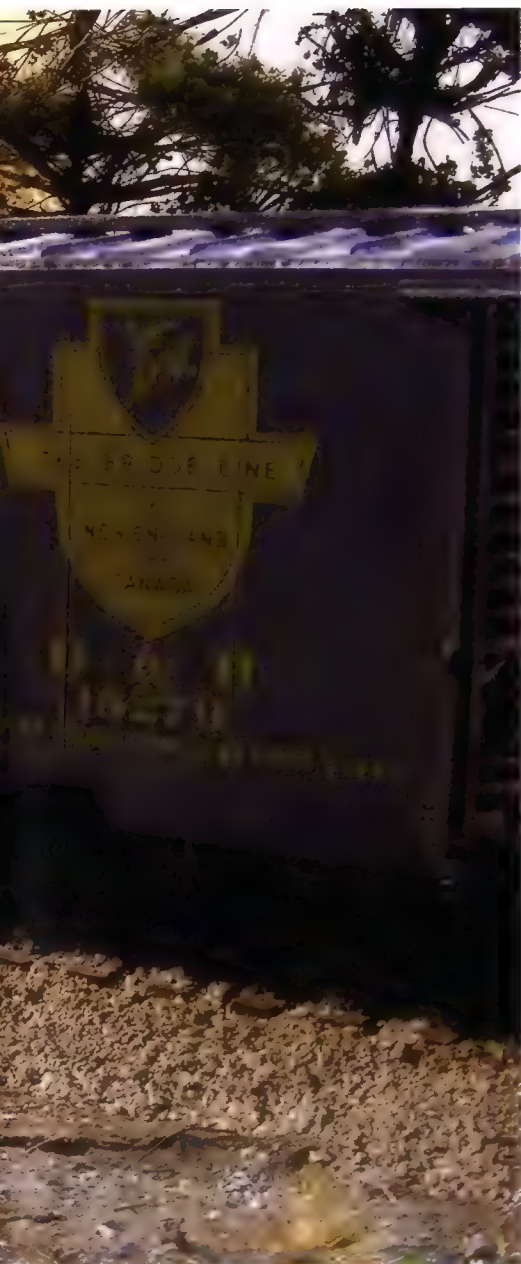
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A Maine Central Alco RS-11 pulls a Delaware & Hudson boxcar from a spur that serves a food processing plant on Michael Cawdrey's freelanced HO scale layout. Michael, from Kallangur, Queensland, Australia, models winter in New England, with the help of snow from Woodland Scenics and Heki. Michael also took the photo.



A Pennsylvania RR class M1a Mountain drifts down-grade with a manifest freight into Sunbury, Pa., on Carl Corsi's HO scale PRR Susquehanna Division. The 22 x 28-foot layout occupies the basement of Carl's home in Hamilton Township, N.J. The locomotive is a Broadway Limited model and the bridge is a Walthers kit.

Val Pistilli photo

Trackside Photos



Even full-size railroads sometimes use pre-built turnouts. Ray Lahodny referred to prototype photos and videos to scratchbuild this model of a Southern Ry. template car, used to carry assembled turnout panels to an installation site. Ray, from Plantation, Fla., photographed the car on his freelanced HO scale layout.





A General Electric 44-ton switcher prepares to pull a loaded Difco dump car from the South Mountain Sand quarry on James Cordaro's HO scale layout. To do so, it will have to cross a branch-line of the Allentown, Lancaster & Williamsport RR, so the brakeman is keeping an eye on the crossing. James, who lives in Ridgecrest, Calif., shot the photo.

Donald Deuell of Parker, Colo., went way back for the inspiration for this scratch-built HO scale coal dealership. Donald constructed the unloading shed, conveyors, bucket elevator, and coal bin, the latter inspired by drawings in the October 1951 to January 1952 issues of *Model Railroader*. Donald also shot the photo.

"I'll meet you there"

Tony Koester



Though Tony models the late-steam era in HO, he's delighted that others choose different prototypes and scales, such as David Popp's N scale Naugatuck Valley RR, which Tony enjoys operating. David Popp photo

The poet Rumi wrote two sentences that seem to have special meaning to the model railroad community as a whole: "Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right doing there is a field. I'll meet you there."

I like to think of model railroaders as a community of friends who share leisure-time interests. We are a reasonably large community as hobby groups go, but very small potatoes when compared to affinity groups. Consider the AARP, for example, which counts its members in the millions.

Worse, we have gotten very good at making our merry band of miniature-railroad enthusiasts look and act even smaller. It's called "Balkanization," the division of a large group into several relatively independent smaller ones.

Back in the formative years, we were simply model railroaders – albeit most modelers probably thought of themselves as "O gaugers," as $1/4" = 1$ foot proportion, originally Naught or 0 scale, was the mainstream activity in those days. The next larger scale was No. 1 scale, which survives to this day as the standard-gauge version of "G gauge" (45mm) track used by garden railway modelers.

Then along came some upstarts who wanted something smaller, not larger, and half-O, which we now know as HO, was born. Over the years we got a whole bowl of alphabet soup: S, TT, OO, OOO, N, Z, G, and F, not to mention good old No. 1.

We also devised a simple way to express any gauge other than the $4'-8\frac{1}{2}"$ standard. Models $1/48$ actual size that rode on three-foot-gauge track were deemed On3; their Maine two-footer cousins were On2. Model a wider-than-standard-gauge railroad? Call it Ow5 or Ow6.

The National Model Railroad Association, which will celebrate its 75th anniversary in the summer of 2010 in Milwaukee, the city of its birth, took on the task of developing standards and recommended practices to ensure interoperability. The goal was, and is, that the locomotive that you bought from Company A will operate with cars from Company B, and both will run on track made by Company C using a power supply made by Company D.

And so, within the bounds of human endeavor, all was well.

Or was it? The seeds of a subtle but growing future dilemma were thus planted. Whereas we once thought of ourselves as model railroaders,

we came to think of ourselves as N scalers or narrow gaugers or garden railway builders. Slowly but surely, we segmented our market share.

We wanted to belong to a scale- or gauge-specific organization, attend only scale- or gauge- or prototype-specific conventions, and read only scale- or gauge- or prototype-specific model railroad magazines.

And here we are today, in many cases barely speaking to those who years or decades ago were considered our closest friends and allies: fellow model railroaders.

I have an axe to grind here, a horse in this race. At least two of them in fact: I'm the editor of an annual issue of *Model Railroader* called *Model Railroad Planning*. I do this work as a contractor, not an employee of Kalmbach Publishing Co., so my opinions are strictly my own. I'm also the at-large director, worldwide, of the NMRA.

Model Railroad Planning, like MR, is a general-interest magazine, although as its title suggests, it's a bit more tightly focused on one aspect of our hobby. I know from reader feedback that modelers of all scales and gauges read it. I also know that I will get letters from X scalers if their pet scale is slighted. It keeps me on my toes, which is good.

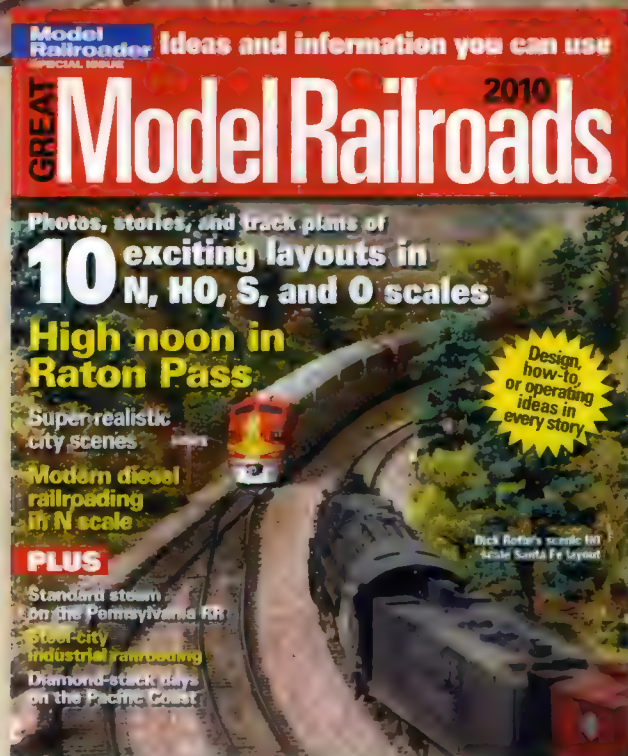
Since the majority of modelers work in HO, it follows that any general-interest magazine or organization will have a preponderance of HO-oriented material. It does little good for the editor to point out that most articles are relevant to any scale or gauge; we seem to want everything customized for our specific needs and delivered to us so labeled.

So what's the punch line? That you should model in only one scale, read only one model railroad magazine, and belong to only one model-railroad-oriented organization, thereby increasing our market clout through greater numbers?

Of course not. Our diversity is what makes this such a fascinating hobby. That said, we could all benefit from a group hug now and then. When we come together despite our differences, we show a more unified face to those who are seeking to join or support us as we enjoy running model trains. **MR**

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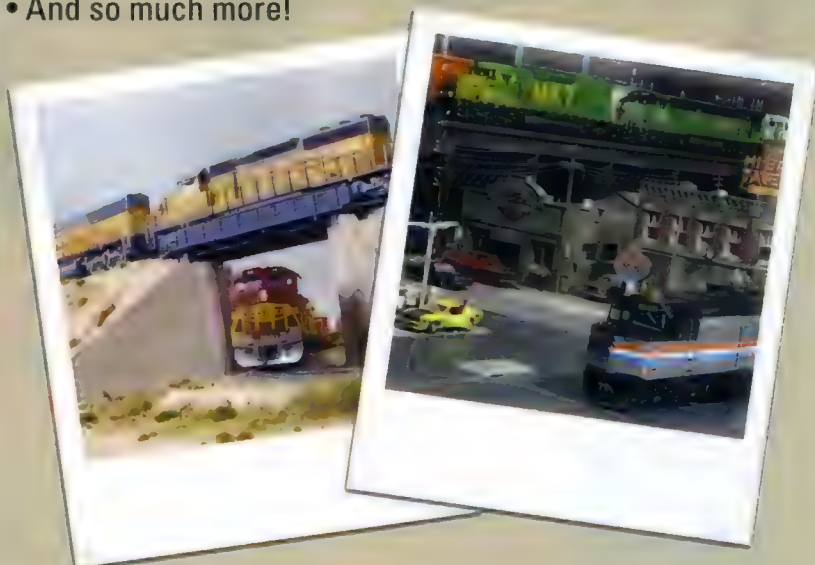
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**Model
Railroader**
MAGAZINE

Mail entries to: *Model Railroader* magazine photo contest
P.O. Box 1612 • Waukesha, WI 53187-1612
Entry deadline: **October 30, 2009**

Rules:

- 1a. For digital photography, send a digital file saved in RAW, TIFF, or JPEG format on a CD or DVD **plus a color print** of your photo. Prints from desktop computer printers are acceptable. Label your disk and your print. Digital photos must be taken with a 4 megapixel camera or better. **We will not accept e-mail submissions.**
- 1b. For film photography, send a color transparency, 35mm or larger, or any glossy color or black-and-white print 5 x 7 inches or larger.
2. The photo must feature a model railroad scene and be taken by the contestant. Each contestant is limited to three entries.
3. Each entry must include a description of the photo. Include the name of the person who did the model work, the scale, the brand names of any equipment shown, and any special modeling techniques used. Also include a brief description of your photography techniques, including any digital enhancements, and the camera and settings used.
4. Digital enhancement of photos is acceptable. However, over-enhancement of images – such as an abundance of digital smoke or the digital insertion of real-life objects into the photo – may diminish your chances of winning.
5. All entries must be received in our office by Oct. 30, 2009. Non-winning entries will be returned only if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided.
6. Published photos become the property of *Model Railroader* magazine. *Model Railroader* reserves the right to retain any entry for possible future publication in our Trackside Photos department or another part of the magazine at normal payment rates.
7. Judging will be conducted by the *Model Railroader* staff, which reserves the right to not award all prizes. Winning entries will be published in the April 2010 issue. Kalmbach Publishing Co. employees and their families are not eligible to enter.

Classified Advertising

Schedule of Events Rate: \$25 per issue (45 word maximum). Ads will contain the following information about the event: state, city, sponsoring organization and name of event, meet, auction or show, dates, location, times, admission fee, name and/or telephone number and/or email of person to contact for information. Name, daytime telephone number and street address of the person providing the information is also required but need not be included in the ad. Unless otherwise requested, ads will be published in the issue month that the event occurs in. Additional months are available at the \$25 per issue fee. Please specify issue date(s).

Word Ad Rates: per issue: 1 insertion — \$1.93 per word, 6 insertions — \$1.79 per word, 12 insertions — \$1.68 per word. \$25.00 MINIMUM per ad. To receive the discount you must order and prepay for all ads at one time. Count all initials, single numbers, groups of numbers (i.e. 4-6-0 or K-27), names, address numbers, street numbers, street name, city, state, zip, phone numbers each as one word. Example: John A. Jones, 2102 South Post St., Waukesha, WI 53187 would count as 10 words.

For MR's private records, please furnish: a telephone number and, when using a P.O. Box in your ad, a street address. Model Railroader reserves the right to refuse listing.

All Copy: Set in standard 6 point type. First several words only set in bold face. If possible, ads should be sent typewritten and categorized to ensure accuracy.

Send your submissions to: Model Railroader — Classifieds 2107 Crossroads Circle, P.O. Box 1612 Waukesha, WI 53187-1612 Toll-free (888) 558-1544 Ext. 815 Fax: 1-262-796-0126 E-mail: onlineclassifieds@kalmbach.com

All ads must be prepaid and pertain to the subject of model

CLOSING DATES: Jan 2009 issue closes Oct. 17, Feb. closes Nov. 18, Mar. closes Dec. 16, Apr. closes Jan. 16, May closes Feb. 16, June closes Mar. 20, July closes Apr. 17, Aug. closes May 15, Sept. closes June 18, Oct. closes July 17, Nov. closes Aug. 18, Dec. closes Sept. 18.

Note to Readers: Show dates, times and locations sometimes change. Confirm the details before driving any distance. Please go to www.mrrmag.com and click on the **Schedule of Events** section to get more complete information on these and other coming events.

Schedule of Events

CA, SIMI VALLEY: SWAP MEET. Santa Susana Railroad Historical Society, Santa Susana Park, 6503 Katherine Rd. August 29, 2009, 7:00am-10:00am. \$2.00 donation, kids free. All scales, equipment, scenery, books, photos, door prizes. For vendor table availability contact Richard 805-526-0371 or e-mail events@santasusannadepot.org

CO, MONTROSE: WESTERN COLORADO MODEL RAILROAD EXTRAVAGANZA Hosted by: San Juan Model Railroad & Historical Society, October 3rd (10:00am-5:00pm) and 4th (10:00am-4:00pm) 2009. At the Montrose County Fair Grounds, 101 North 2nd Street. Contact: Paul 970-323-6469.

CT, NORTH HAVEN: NEW HAVEN RAILROAD HISTORICAL AND TECHNICAL ASSOCIATION 47TH ANNUAL REUNION AND TRAIN SHOW. Holiday Inn, Rte. 5, Exit 12 off I-91. Saturday, November 14, 2009. Train show 9:00am-3:00pm. Films, slide shows, modeling clinics, dealers. \$5.00/Adult, \$8.00/Family. Information: Rick Abramson at e-mail: nhr379@att.net

DE, HARRINGTON: 1ST ANNUAL TRAIN AND TOY SHOW. Sponsored by the Harrington Parks and Recreation, 114 E Liberty Street. Saturday August 29th, 2009 from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm. Admission \$2 - adults, children under 12 - FREE. Contact: Bill Falasco, 302-398-7975. E-mail: bfa1asco@cityofharrington.us

FL, LARGO: SUNCOAST MODEL RAILROAD CLUB TRAIN SHOW AND OPEN HOUSE. Minnreg Hall, 6340 126th Avenue. September 19-20, 2009, 10:00am-4:00pm. Adults \$5.00, children 12-17 \$1.00, under 12 free. Large model train and railroadiana show with over 100 tables. Parking free. www.suncoastmrrc.com for info and flyers.

FL, MELBOURNE: TRAIN & TOY SHOW. Azan Shrine Center, 1591 W. Eau Gallie Blvd. Saturday, September 5, 2009, 9:00am-2:00pm. Adults \$5.00, under 10 free with adult. Questions - Dealer Tables call 321-267-3622 or 321-757-0265.

FL, OCALA: LIONS SEMI-ANNUAL TRAIN SHOW Ocala National Guard Armory, 900 SW 20th St. November 14-15, 2009, Saturday 9:00am-4:00pm and Sunday 10:00am-3:00pm. Adults \$4.00, children 12 and under free. Information: Barbara West 352-857-2874.

FL, THE VILLAGES: RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY MODEL TRAIN SHOW & RAILROADIANA SHOW & SALE. Lake Miona Recreation Center, 1526 Buena Vista Blvd. August 22-23, 2009, Saturday 10:00am-4:00pm, Sunday 10:00am-3:00pm. Admission \$5.00, children under 12 free w/ adult. Contact Alan Goldberg 352-205-4322, e-mail: amgold15@hotmail.com

ID, CALDWELL: TREASURE VALLEY TRAIN EXPO O'Connor Field House. September 11th, 12th & 13th, 2009. Show Hours: Fri. & Sat. 12:00pm-8:00pm, Sunday 12:00pm-6:00pm. Admission \$5.00, children 12 and under free. Modular layouts, model contests, vendors, clinics. Contact Troy Dewey 208-461-5028, e-mail treasurevalleytrainexpo@gmail.com or visit www.treasurevalleytrainexpo.com

IL, DECATUR: DECATUR TRAIN FAIR 2009 Decatur Civic Center, 1 Gary K Anderson Plaza, Corner of Eldorado Street and Franklin Street. September 19-20, 2009. Saturday 10:00am to 5:00pm, Sunday 10:00am to 4:00pm. Adults \$4.00, under 12 free with adult. Steven Bricker 217-864-4397, sabricker@comcast.net

IN, CROWN POINT: CROWN POINT MODEL RAILROAD SHOW & SWAP MEET St. Matthias Church Hall, 101 Burrell Dr. Sun. Oct. 25, 10:30am-3:00pm. \$3.00, children \$1.00. Tom 219-663-4480

MA, TAUNTON: OLD COLONY MODEL RAILROAD CLUB EIGHTH ANNUAL MODEL RAILROAD SHOW AND SALE. Taunton Holiday Inn, Myles Standish Industrial Park, Exit 9 from Route 495. September 27, 2009, 10:00am-3:30pm. Adults \$4, children under 12/scouts in uniform free. Contact Dennis Ingalls, 508-285-3963, e-mail: dingalls@comcast.net

ME, PORTLAND: 1ST ANNUAL PORTLAND MODEL RAILROAD & HOBBY SHOW East End Community School, 195 North Street. October 3, 2009 10am - 4pm Admission: Adults \$4.00, Children under 10 FREE. Modular layouts in N, HO, ON30, O and others. For questions please e-mail: maine.ntrack@yahoo.com

MI, DURAND: TRAIN & TOY SHOW. First United Methodist Church, 10016 E. Newburg Rd. Saturday, September 26, 2009, 10:00am-4:00pm. Adults \$2.00, under 12 free. Robert DeClerg, Jr., 989-288-3291.

MI: DETROIT AREA'S PREMIER ONE-DAY TRAIN SHOW & SALE. First Sunday in March and November. Presented by GRATIOT VALLEY RAILROAD CLUB. Adults \$5.50, under 12 free. 10am to 4pm. Layouts, clinics, door prizes, 400+ vendor tables. Details at www.gvrr.org or call 586-468-4877.

MO, KANSAS CITY: 2ND ANNUAL TRAIN FAIR Union Station, 30 W Pershing Road. September 26-27, 2009. Saturday 9:00am-5:00pm, Sunday 10:00am-4:00pm. Admission: \$7, 11 and under FREE. Special events for kids. Call 816-460-2020 or visit: www.unionstation.org for more information.

MO, ST. LOUIS: BOEING EMPLOYEES' RAILROAD CLUB SWAP MEET. Greensfelder Recreation Complex at Queeny Park, 550 Weidman Road. September 12, 2009, 10:00am-3:00pm. Admission: \$3.00 (children under 12 free). Tables: \$15.00. Wayne Schimmel, 733 Hwy. Y, Winfield, MO 63389-2206, 636-668-6313 (after 6:30pm Central Time). E-mail: wwhtehrse@aol.com

NE, NORTH PLATTE: "RAIL FEST" September 18, 19, & 20, 2009. America's premier railroad event! Tour the world's largest railroad yard and visit the Golden Spike Tower for an aerial view of Bailey Yards. Visit: www.nprailfest.com or call 308-534-3648.

NM, LORDSBURG: LORDSBURG HIDALGO RAILROAD DAYS October 17-18, 2009. Prototype Displays: Model Railroads; Contests: Photographic Displays; Action Films and more. Inquiries: Dick Davis, 807 Duncan Hwy., Lordsburg, NM 88045, 575-590-0143.

OH, FOSTORIA: RAIL FESTIVAL & TRAIN SHOW. September 19th, 2009. Saturday 10-4. Fostoria Town Center & Fostoria Middle School. Bus shuttles between venues. Model train displays, historic rail tour, photo contest, soup contest and more. Free admission. Visit: www.FostoriaIronTriangle.com; or call 419-435-1781

PA, TAMAQUA: TRAIN SALE AND SWAP MEET. Salvation Army Building, 105 West Broad St. October 11, 2009, 8:00am-3:00pm. Model Trains and Railroadiana Sales. \$3.00, under 12 free. 570-645-9133 or 570-952-4378, trainnut@ptd.net or dirtycoalman@hotmail.com

TX, TEMPLE: CENTRAMOD 27TH ANNUAL TEMPLE MODEL TRAIN SHOW. Frank Mayborn Convention Center Temple, September 19th and 20th, 2009. Saturday 10:00am-5:00pm, Sunday 11:00am-5:00pm. Adults \$5.00, children 12 and under free. Discount for Seniors, Active Duty Military and their dependents. Contact trainshow@centramod.org CentraMod, Inc. www.centramod.org

VA, VIRGINIA BEACH: TIDEWATER DIVISION'S 20TH ANNUAL TRAIN SHOW AND SALE Virginia Beach Convention Center, 1000 19th Street, September 19-20, 2009, 10:00am-4:00pm both days Admission: \$7.00/children under 12 free w/adult. Operating trains (various gauges), test tracks, train doctors. Info 757-426-2811, E-mail nawneycreek@msn.com Flyer: <http://nrma-mer-tidewater.org> Map: <http://virginiabeachconventioncenter.com>

WI, MONROE: GREEN COUNTY MODEL RAILROADERS INC. 31ST ANNUAL TRAIN SHOW AND SWAP MEET. State Line Ice and Community Expo, 1632 4th Avenue West. Saturday & Sunday, September 26th & 27th, 2009, 10:00am-4:00pm. For information contact Paul Schoenike 608-325-9491.

Classifieds

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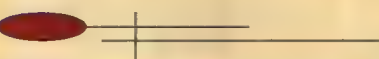
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The Operators

Andy Sperandio



The train order semaphore at Fairmont, Ohio, tells the crew of a Maumee Route local that there are orders to pick up. The Tomar train order signals on this HO railroad are locally controlled. Bill Darnaby photo

Train order signals – part 2

The big question remaining after last month's explanation of prototype train order signals is how to use them on model railroads. Obviously we want to be able to signal train crews that they'll receive orders at a given station. Most operating layouts, however, won't have enough space or crew members to have an operator at each station. There are several ways to deal with that situation, but first you should be aware of a certain problem created by the rules governing train order signals.

There were two schools of thought about the normal position of a train order signal. On railroads using the Standard Code of Operating Rules or similar rule books, "order boards" were normally set at "stop" when an operator was on duty.

When a train approached, the operator checked with the dispatcher to be sure if the train would receive orders or not. Only when the train approached within sighting distance would the operator clear the signal if there were no orders, or move a three-position signal to indicate that a clearance and orders were ready to be picked up.

However, according to the Consolidated Code of Operating Rules and similar books, the normal position of a train order signal was clear whether or not an operator was on duty. The operator changed the signal when told by the dispatcher to copy an order for a train in one direction or the other, and only cleared it again when the order had been delivered.

Most model railroads will probably follow the Consolidated Code on this, whether or not they use it otherwise. Having clear as the normal position is more convenient for the dispatcher or operator who has to control signals at multiple stations from a single location.

Here are three ways of handling train order signals I've seen used successfully on model railroads.

Dispatcher only. On some layouts the dispatcher both composes and writes out copies of orders and clearances for the train crews. In that case it's most practical for train order signals to be controlled from the dispatcher's desk or office.

To issue an order, the dispatcher first sets the signal at the issuing station to stop and then writes the

order. Crew members get orders and clearances from the dispatcher, so the dispatcher knows when a signal can be cleared.

Dispatcher and operator. The dispatcher dictates orders to the operator by phone just as on the big roads, and the operator reads the orders back for the dispatcher to check. This reproduces the atmospheric communication of train-order dispatching, lets the operator learn from a more-experienced dispatcher, and also helps if the operator catches a mistake before it's published to the train crews.

The train order signals may still be controlled remotely, but now it's the operator who has the controls. And crew members report to the operator to pick up their orders instead of to the dispatcher, adding a realistic layer of remoteness to the dispatcher's position.

Local signal controls. Again there's a dispatcher dictating orders to the operator. However, instead of controlling the signals remotely, the operator must go to the station to set the signal. Returning to the desk, the operator reports "SD (signal displayed) west (or east)" to the dispatcher, who then dictates the order and take the op's read-back.

There may also be clips on the layout fascia at train order stations, so the operator can hang the orders and clearances for pickup. The crews won't have to go to the operator's location except when orders require a crew member's signature. The train crews may even be empowered to clear the signals, if they understand the responsibility of making sure there aren't orders remaining for another train in the same direction.

Compromises. As with many aspects of model railroad operation, we often have to accept compromises in adapting prototype procedures to our layouts. But there are enough varied possibilities, even more than I could describe here, to reproduce what you find to be the most important effects of using train order signals. **MR**

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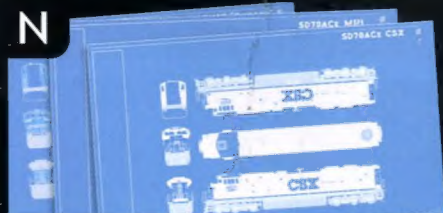
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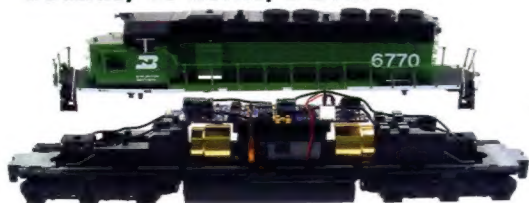
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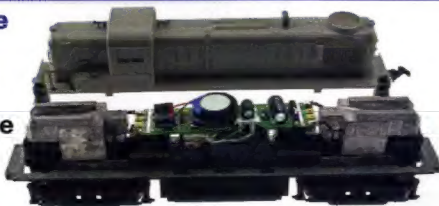
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